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THE LIFE STORY OF  
H.R.H. THE DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE



This photograph presented to the author by her father the Rev A. W. Bailey, bears the following inscription

"This photograph with his autograph subscribed given to me by H R H The Duke of Cambridge January 1898 (A W Bailey) Adolphus Augustus Frederick FitzGeorge-Sofia Jane Holden Married in Hessle Church, Yorkshire, by A W B, 21 Sep 1875 Charles Edward Archibald Watkin Hamilton-Olga Mary Adelaide FitzGeorge Married in St Peter's Church, Eaton Square London, by the subdean of the Chapel Royal, Chaplain to H R H the Duke of

# The Life Story of H.R.H. THE DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE

*By*  
ETHEL M. DUFF

"I'll grant you Queens are not easy to find—especially for thrones like that of England. But it is easier to find a Queen than to find the one and only mate for any particular human being."

*William IV.*

"His Royal Highness will experience great joys and great sorrows. From two directions he will come very close to a throne, but he will never occupy one—except in the hearts of those who love him. He will marry for love, and against the advice of his friends and counsellors."

*An eminent German Astrologer on the birth of  
H.R.H. Prince George, Duke of Cambridge.*

*With 24 Illustrations*

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Class No. (बिभाग) ..... ७२३  
Book No. (पुस्तक) ..... C १४ D  
Recd. d On. .... May 1948

3718

Made and Printed in Great Britain at  
The Mayflower Press, Plymouth. William Brendon & Son, Ltd.  
1938

TO THE MEMORY OF  
MY HUSBAND,  
CHARLES HENRY DUFF



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## FOREWORD

**T**WO hundred yards down Whitehall from Trafalgar Square stands the statue of a soldier on his horse. The stone is darkening now, dust harbours in the crannies of the plumed hat, and the passing of a quarter of a century of Time has dimmed the glory of the sculptor's work, just as it has dimmed the memory of the man whose likeness it bears.

Of all those thousands who, day in, day out, year in, year out, board the buses that take them to their homes beyond the River, how many glance at the dimming statue that they pass?

The face of the rider is set towards the south, towards the Abbey and the Houses of Parliament, the stage on which he once was so important a figure. And the lettering on the plinth reads :

“ FIELD-MARSHAL HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS GEORGE DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE, K.G., G.C.B., &c., Commander-in-Chief of the British Army 1856-1895. Born 1819. Died 1904.”

It is strange that the life of George, Duke of Cambridge, has not a larger niche in public memory, for the statue that commemorates a Commander-in-Chief might well have been raised, in far grander style, to a great King of England.

It was on the birth of Prince George in Hanover that a German astrologer forecast : “ His Royal Highness will experience great joys and great sorrows. From two

## FOREWORD

directions he will come very close to a throne, but he will never occupy one—except in the hearts of those who love him. He will marry for love, and against the advice of his friends and counsellors."

And thus it was to the letter.

Concerning the first direction. Prince George was born some six weeks before his cousin Victoria, and therefore for this short period was the first of George III's grandchildren in order of accession to the throne. With the birth of the future Queen his chance of kingship dwindled.

Concerning the second direction. It has now been ascertained almost beyond doubt that if Prince George of Cambridge had so wished, he could have become Consort of the Queen of England.

It is hardly to be wondered that rumour was busy when Victoria ascended the throne, that the names of the young Queen and Prince George were coupled together. Prince George had been brought up in England, was the son of an English prince, grandson of an English king. Who was there to compete with him ? The answer was : No one but obscure foreigners.

There was no shortage of evidence for the tongue of Rumour. Prince George made a Colonel in the British Army. . . . Prince George as the Queen's opening partner at State Balls. . . . The Queen sees Prince George alone at Buckingham Palace. . . . The Queen gives a silver dressing-case to Prince George on his birthday. . . . The Queen at Ascot with George, at Eton with George. . . . The Queen opens her twentieth birthday ball with a quadrille with George. . . .

And behind the scenes Lord Melbourne smiled benignly and waited for the young Queen to choose her Consort.

Then the last part of the astrologer's forecast came

true. "His Royal Highness will marry for love, and against the advice of his friends and counsellors."

Thus it was that Prince George fell in love with a beautiful actress he saw at Drury Lane, Louisa Fairbrother, and married her. By so doing, he braved the anger of a woman who looked upon herself as more than Queen—to him. He braved the hostility of Royal Houses, of statesmen and society, and in return he gained fifty years of ideally happy married life.

No monarch has ever been more angered at a morganatic marriage than was Queen Victoria when her chosen cousin married an actress. No morganatic wife was ever so unrecognized. No marriage was ever so firmly and completely ignored. Yet love conquered all of these.

The marriage came at a time when it was not an uncommon occurrence for princes to marry out of their sphere. There is but one interpretation, one answer, to the Queen's actions. . . .

The life of H.R.H. Duke of Cambridge revolved round the stars of two women, Victoria, cousin and Queen, and Louisa Fairbrother, wife and actress. The one claimed the hours of duty, the other the hours of privacy.

Looking back at the great human drama which ran so long with Victoria as leading lady, next to her it was George who had the longest part, George the most entrances; all the time it was Victoria and George. Other players stole scenes, Albert, Lord Melbourne, Sir Robert Peel, Lord Palmerston, Gladstone, Disraeli, John Brown. . . . But none of them were on the stage both when the curtain rose and when it fell for the last time—eighty years after.

George and Victoria, born within a few weeks of each other, passing through the greater part of a century

## FOREWORD

together, dying together at the opening of the next. . . . George and Victoria as children together, George and Victoria as rumoured Queen and Consort. . . . George as Victoria's Commander-in-Chief, writing back to her from distant battlefields. . . . Victoria turning to George in her widowhood. . . . Victoria leaning year by year more on the shoulder of her cousin. . . . Victoria saying sadly in 1899: "And now we are the only old ones left. . . ." George by the side of Victoria at her Diamond Jubilee. . . . George, the link with the past and with her to the end.

Beside this epic, man and woman walking hand in hand from cradle to grave, the stars of those who shot into prominence for a few short years must surely pale.

If Fate had so decreed that it should have been George, and not Albert, who joined the Queen as Consort, the history of England would have taken on a different complexion. It is impossible to forecast down what road we might now be treading. As it was, the Royal cousins found great loves in different directions, and contented themselves with lasting friendship.

Co-operating with my mother in the compilation of this book has meant the passing of fascinating hours. Piece by piece the human jig-saw has fallen into place, revealing the picture of two women—and a man.

My mother recalls pictures of the days of forty years ago with eyes that have seen. I can only surmise. But on one point I speak with finality.

His Royal Highness George, Duke of Cambridge, was a very gallant gentleman.

DAVID DUFF.

LONDON, 1938.

# The Life Story of H.R.H. THE DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE

## CHAPTER I THE BIRTH OF A DUKE

*A*ND the Prince-who-was-to-be-King sent forth his younger brother to search in the castles and courts of foreign lands for a Princess worthy to be his bride and Queen, and mother of Kings. And the younger Prince travelled far and wide and visited many Palaces in many different lands, but no Princess did he find to suit his brother's demands. At length he came to the castle of the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel and there he found a Princess so beautiful that at the first sight of her he fell deeply in love himself. But his search was for a bride for his elder brother, and true to his word he hurried a message to England telling of the treasure that he had found. But the Prince-who-was-to-be-King, when he read of this perfect Princess, understood and sent back word that his brother should marry the Princess himself, if so he wished. So the younger Prince married his Princess Charming and they lived happily ever after.

Like some story from a book of fairy tales was the romance of Prince Adolphus and Princess Augusta, father and mother of the Prince George, Duke of Cambridge, with whom this book is concerned.

For all that the romancers tell us, I think it may be safely held that of all kinds of marriage, Fate is least able

to work her wiles in connection with those in which Royalty are concerned. There it is usually a matter of careful preliminary arrangement between ministers and diplomats, with a mass of circumstances which have to be taken into consideration, and a number of rules which must be meticulously observed. And under such conditions Fate does not, as a rule, have very much opportunity of taking a hand in the game.

Yet there is an exception to every rule and Fate certainly had a strong hand in the proceedings preliminary to the birth of Prince George.

Prince Adolphus Frederick was the seventh son of George III. Being sent to Hanover when a boy so that he might learn German and attend as a student the famous University of Gottingen, he chose to reside almost continually at his Hanoverian home thereafter.

In 1801, when he was twenty-seven years of age, he was created Duke of Cambridge—the Dukedom being revived for this purpose, and conferred upon him with the Earldom of Tipperary and the Barony of Culloden.

The Duke chose to follow the profession of arms, and did so with considerable honour and distinction. He was deservedly popular with the troops he commanded, for in his campaigns he insisted in sharing all the men's hardships, and when wounded and invalided home, returned to the battle-front far sooner than he really should have done, and certainly much sooner than any other officer of his rank would have been expected to do.

Physically Adolphus was a fine-looking man, well built and with a dignified carriage and a firm, yet kindly, face.

His character was in accordance with his outward appearance. Keen enough as a soldier and something of a master of the technique of his chosen profession, he was also, unusually enough, a great appreciator of the

arts, particularly those of music and painting. It has been truly said of him that : " He was a devout lover of the beautiful, and a friend of all true artists."

With these somewhat contradictory traits he combined yet a third—a deep and genuine, if unostentatious, sense of religion. He was a Churchman of the old school ; a strict observer of the Sabbath and of all the forms and ceremonies of his Church.

His pursuits and pleasures were entirely masculine, and it would appear that he had no more than was absolutely necessary to do with women up to the age of forty-three. It was then that, in 1817, Princess Charlotte died, and it became imperative that the King's sons should marry.

At first Adolphus was inclined to rebel against this necessity. He was quite happy as he was and very much doubted if his state would be improved by matrimonial bonds, however lightly worn.

He was, indeed, no more than half-persuaded that the necessity for such a step on his part really existed when, probably as an experiment of his own possible proceedings in the future, he consented to the request of his brother, the Duke of Clarence, later to become William IV—to " keep an eye open for a likely bride for him in the course of his travels."

Apparently Adolphus took this mission very seriously, and wrote several times to his brother on the subject of certain ladies, who were undoubtedly eligible, but in regard to whom he was not particularly enthusiastic.

And then, at the Court of the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, he encountered the Princess Augusta, the daughter of the Landgrave.

It would seem, from all accounts, to have been a plain case of love-at-first-sight, but the Duke was true to what

he considered his trust—quixotic as it may seem. Adolphus confided in an intimate friend somewhat as follows :

“ The Princess Augusta would make an ideal Queen for England, and as, apart from this delicate mission with which he has entrusted me, my brother is a great deal more likely to reign than I ever am, I consider it to be my moral duty to the nation, as well as to my brother, that he should have the first opportunity of making his advances ! ”

He there and then sat down and wrote his letter, describing the Princess with a wealth of detail, and in a tone which glaringly contrasted with his previous communications on the subject.

It was said, by one who was present at the time, that the Duke of Clarence read the somewhat voluminous epistle at first with a puzzled frown. Then, scanning it again, he exclaimed :

“ Why, the fellow has written this more with his heart than with his pen, I’ll be bound ! ” Bringing his fist down with a thump on the table, he burst into a roar of laughter : “ By heavens, but I have it ! He’s in love with her himself—and after all his sulking and grumbling at the idea of marriage. I’ll write and tell him to take her himself, bless him ! ”

When someone, also privileged to read the letter, pointed out what Adolphus had said regarding the suitability of Princess Augusta for the throne of England, the Duke replied :

“ I’ll grant you Queens are not easy to find—especially for thrones like that of England. But it is easier to find a Queen than to find the one and only mate for any particular human being ! So Adolphus has her—if she will have *him* ! ”

One of the intimates of the Duke of Cambridge at this

time, writing to a friend, describes how the Duke seemed to be suffering from some obscure ailment. He was, said the writer: ". . . extraordinarily moody and silent at all times, and seems to take little interest in anything. His long fits of taciturnity are interspersed with moments of extreme irritability—another most unusual thing in him. I am really getting seriously alarmed about him . . ."

No doubt readers will readily recognize the symptoms!

But with the arrival of his brother's reply to his letter came also a change. The Duke came to life again! He lost no time in prosecuting his suit, and it was successful. One gathers that the Princess Augusta had, almost from the first, reciprocated his feelings, and it is interesting to speculate on what might have happened had not the Duke of Clarence been either so far-seeing or so generous!

But this, plainly, was one of the instances where Fate will play her part, even in the love-affairs of the mighty!

The Royal Wedding took place first in Hanover, on May 7th, 1818, and was solemnized again in London.

In due course the happy pair (and here the description seems to be more than a merely conventional phrase) returned to Hanover, and there Prince George was born, at the Duke of Cambridge's "Palais," also known as Cambridge House, on March 26th, 1819.

At the time this event was considered of the greatest importance in this country, for Victoria, later to be England's longest-reigning monarch, had not then been born, and so the little Prince George William Frederick Charles was the first direct descendant of George III, and therefore quite likely to sit on the throne of England at some future date.

How important his birth was considered to be is attested by a remarkable document which was sent as a

despatch by His Britannic Majesty's Envoy at the Court of Berlin to Viscount Castlereagh, on March 26th, 1819.

This document states that the signatories thereto, the Duke of Clarence, the Earl of Mayo, and the Right Honourable George Henry Rose, having been specially instructed to attend the confinement of Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cambridge, were summoned to the Palace by the Duke at a quarter to one in the morning of the 26th.

They were informed that Her Royal Highness's labour pains had commenced, and "repaired forthwith to a room adjoining to that in which Her Royal Highness was to be delivered . . . the door between these two rooms remaining open during the whole of our attendance; that having been previously informed by His Royal Highness that Her Royal Highness would be confined in her bedroom up one flight of stairs, and that free access must remain from that room to her dressing-room immediately contiguous to it, and these rooms having been previously shewn to us . . . the seal of the Right Honourable George Henry Rose was affixed so as to close it upon the outside of the outward door of the dressing-room under the directions of His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge who locked the door and gave the key of it to the said Right Honourable George Henry Rose, so that no communication could take place from without, but under our eyes, we remaining in the room adjoining the bedroom and through which all persons entering that bedroom must pass; that sharp labour continued until ten minutes past two of the morning aforesaid, when Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cambridge was safely delivered of a male child, whose sex we determined by actual inspection. . . ."

The birth of Prince George was duly recorded in the



PRINCE GEORGE OF CAMBRIDGE AND  
PRINCESS CHARLOTTE

H.R.H. PRINCESS MARY, DUCHESS OF TECK  
From a water colour drawing by James R. Swinton



*London Gazette* of April 6th, and his baptism in the same journal under the date of May 22nd.

The Prince paid his first visit of State to his Royal Uncle when he was about two years old. The King was then paying a visit to Hanover. Prince George was accompanied by his cousin, Prince George of Hanover, and the infants were in the charge of their respective nurses.

The King was greatly pleased with both the infants.

"As fine a couple of young fellows as you'll be likely to find anywhere!" said His Majesty. "And much credit due to these good ladies who have tended them so well, I'll be bound. . . ."

The two nurses were presented to him :

"This is Mrs. Ford, Your Majesty—and this is Mrs. Page!"

To the amazement of most of those present the King stared for a moment, and then chuckled loudly :

"And some fools say that Shakespeare is not true to life!" he exclaimed, at last; "why, here are the Merry Wives of Windsor in the flesh!"

Just about that time the science of astrology had become popular with the Hanoverian aristocracy, and, regarding it more as a novelty than anything else, the Duke of Cambridge arranged for one of the more eminent astrologers to cast the young Prince's horoscope.

When completed, part of this document read :

"His Royal Highness will experience great joys and great sorrows. From two directions he will come very close to a throne, but he will never occupy one—except in the hearts of those who love him. He will marry for love, and against the advice of his friends and counsellors."

When the Duke read this his comment was :

"That sounds like a full life—and as for the throne, it is a thing one can do without, after all!"

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY DAYS AND CHARACTER

**F**OR the first eleven years of his life Prince George remained at Hanover, in an atmosphere that seemed to agree with him, for he thrived well in it.

But on at least one occasion he came very near to losing his young life, and it would seem that the saving of it was due partly to his father and partly to what can only be regarded as an act of Providence. In those days scarlet fever, now regarded as a comparatively trivial infantile complaint, was a serious illness, and exacted a heavy toll of the young life of most European countries.

When quite a small boy Prince George, despite all the care that was invariably exercised in regard to such matters, came within reach of infection and went down with the fever. At first it seemed to be no more than an ordinary attack, but after a while he took a turn for the worse and despite the best medical skill obtainable his condition became very serious.

The Duke of Cambridge was at dinner one night when a white-faced equerry hurried into the room and, bending over the Duke, whispered :

“ Pardon me, Your Royal Highness, but Doctor —— thinks it desirable that you should come to the sick-room as soon as possible ! ”

The Duke went as pale as his own table-cloth, and said, in a similar tone :

" Does that mean . . . ? "

He could not finish his sentence, and the equerry himself was so overcome that he could only nod, in defiance of all etiquette.

The Duke had been in the act of drinking some wine—a Rhine wine known as Steinberger—when interrupted, and now he stood up with the glass still in his hand. All he said was :

" I must beg you to excuse me—I have an urgent matter needing my immediate attention ! "

Then, with the glass of wine still in his hand, he hurried upstairs.

In the sick-room there was a hush, pregnant with the shadow of Death. At the far end of the room doctors and nurses stood in a little group, huddled like sheep and staring almost as stupidly when the anxious father hurried in, with the incongruous glass of wine still in his hand. Only the chief medical man and a single nurse stood by the bedside.

The Duke looked a mute, agonized question at the doctor, who bowed his head and murmured :

" I fear he is sinking—fast—Your Royal Highness ! "

The Duke brushed him away, and stood by the bed looking down at the little sufferer, whose eyes seemed already to be dulling under the touch of the dread Hand.

But at sight, not of his father, but of that glass of cool, sparkling liquid, the eyes brightened and the fever-parched child extended a weak hand towards the glass.

There could be no mistake as to what he wanted, and the Duke bent towards him with it. There came a word and a movement of protest from the doctor, but the Duke turned on him sharply :

" Peace, man ! If the child is dying it can do no harm—and shall I refuse the last request of my own son . . . ? "

He tenderly raised the Prince, and held the glass to his lips. The boy drank, greedily, and almost finished the wine. Then he laid back on his pillows, smiled faintly at his father, gave vent to a long sigh—and closed his eyes.

The watchful doctor hurried forward and bent over him as the Duke drew a little back.

“Is—is he . . . dead . . . ?” he ventured, at last.

The doctor did not reply for a few moments, and when he did look up there was a strange expression on his face :

“Your Royal Highness, it is a miracle—or something very like it! He is sleeping peacefully—and that means that there is still hope—great hope . . . !”

And the hope was fully justified, for from that moment the young Prince began to get better, and with the natural resilience of the very young, was soon quite out of danger and mending rapidly.

“It would seem, Your Royal Highness,” said the doctor, with a wry smile, “that either your wine or your parental affection—or both of them—were more effective than either my medicines or my skill !”

“Let us rather say,” was the grave retort, “that God saw fit to be infinitely kind !”

Be that as it may, for a number of years afterwards Steinberger was always drunk on the Prince’s birthday, in memory of his remarkable recovery.

At the age of six it was decided that the Prince was old enough to have a resident tutor. To fill that post the Reverend Henry Harvey, hitherto Curate-in-Charge of Ealing, was selected, and in 1825 he made his way to Hanover to take up his post.

It would seem that Mr. Harvey, although a very good man, was not a very strong one, nor much of a disciplinarian. Finding the task of looking after the Royal

youngster rather too much for him, he applied for and obtained the services of an assistant.

This was a Mr. Welsh, and how or why he was selected for the post remains something of a mystery. An undoubted scholar, he exhibited almost from the moment of his arrival in Hanover very definite signs of extreme eccentricity.

It was one of his duties to read from the Bible to the young Prince every night after he was in bed. One night the Prince's valet entered the room, wearing soft shoes which made no noise on the thick carpets.

To his amazement and horror he found the tutor, Mr. Welsh, kneeling beside the Prince's bed, with the Bible lying open on the floor beside him, his hands clasped, his head thrown back and his eyes glaring at the ceiling in an expression of most terrible agony, while, in a voice that shook with emotion, he cried aloud :

“ Alas, O God, Thou, who ordered Abraham to slay his beloved and only begotten son in Thine honour, why hast Thou put this task upon mine unworthy shoulders ? How, even to Thine honour, and for the good of the world, can I bring myself to slay this innocent child who lies so helpless before me . . . ! ”

The horrified valet waited to hear no more, but rushed downstairs with the dread news that Mr. Welsh had gone raving mad and was about to murder the Prince !

One can imagine the sensation it caused in that quiet and decorous palace !

A number of servants and others rushed upstairs. Someone succeeded in luring Mr. Welsh quietly from the bedroom, but on the landing outside he became violent, and was only secured after a fierce struggle. Thereafter he was certified as insane by the doctors and removed to a mental institution

This was a somewhat alarming experience for a child of but ten years of age. But the Prince seems to have taken it quite coolly, his principal emotion being regret at the loss of his assistant tutor, whose eccentricities had amused him greatly !

The position of assistant-tutor, thus rendered vacant so tragically, was eventually filled by the Rev. John Ryle Wood, and this gentleman took sole charge of the young Prince. Although a strong, rigidly upright character, and a very strict disciplinarian, he won Prince George's regard and confidence almost from the first, and it is said to be due to his suggestion that H.R.H. started to keep a diary—a habit which he maintained, on and off, for a number of years, and which has proved of the utmost value in giving the most intimate sidelights on his rather complex and interesting character. For the moulding of which character, be it said, the Rev. J. R. Wood was very considerably responsible.

In later years this good and capable divine became the Prince's Chaplain, and eventually a Canon of Worcester Cathedral.

When the Prince reached the age of eleven, in 1830, it was thought better that he should receive an entirely English education. So to England the young Prince went, in the charge of Mr. Wood and took up his residence with the King and Queen. There is no doubt that, at first, the Prince felt the change from the placid atmosphere of the Hanoverian Court to the more hectic one of England, and felt even more bitterly the necessary separation from his parents—and in particular from his mother.

The letters of the Princess Augusta, Prince George's mother, written to her son after he had left her to come to England, are illuminating.

The following are extracts from some of these :

“ RUMPENHEIM,

“ *August 9, 1830.*

“ MY PRECIOUS GEORGE,

“ These are the first words I have to address to you by the help of pen and paper, since it is the first time we have ever been separated. Did I not, my angel boy, well keep my promise to you to make the parting quick and short ? God grant that you have not grieved too much, and had no return of your severe bad headache, like that you had at Mayence, for then you would have sadly needed poor Mama, who knows her George so well, and knows what he needs and likes. Ah, could I but hasten to you every two hours to exchange a couple of words ! . . . Make plenty of time to write, it is my only consolation. If you cannot read this, my first letter, get your dear Papa to help you now, while he is still with you ; *your tutors I do not wish* should read either my letters to you, or yours to me. . . . I kiss you in thought. Alas ! That I cannot really myself do so.”

This pathetic letter was written almost immediately after the parting, and might well have been written by any heart-broken mother to any lonely little son.

The next is dated the following day :

“ Good morning, my dear, good Georgie. By now I suppose you have got over the bad sea-voyage and are on your way to London. . . . Yesterday we had a quiet day, I was still very tired and exhausted. . . . Now God bless you, my sweet angel, a thousand times.

“ Your most fondly loving Mother,

“ AUGUSTA.”

Every day during those years of separation letters such as these were written by the loving, anxious mother, as desolate in her palace, and as lonely at her Court, as any humble mother in country cottage or town slum in such circumstances.

I will quote from one more, written when the Duchess was on the eve of making one of her periodical visits to England to see her child. It was written in May, 1831:

“ Since I love you so unutterably, my good George, I do not like a single day to pass without my having written you at least a few words, otherwise in the evening it seems to me to have been a lost day. . . . My sweet George is now, doubtless, every day thinking as I do how near is coming the beautiful day of our reunion. Mind you manage to come to meet us at Deptford, that I may see you *at once*, and then we can drive up together to London. . . .”

I have previously mentioned Prince George's Diary, a most valuable and interesting record, in that from it one can form a far clearer idea of the young Prince's character and of its development than one could possibly learn from the observation of those about him. As will be seen he wrote with a singular frankness, and seems never to have made pretences, even to himself.

The first entry, singularly enough in the case of youthful diaries, does not, so to speak, place himself in the centre of the stage. It is a very brief and isolated one, and reads:

“ I have taken Augusta out of bed for the first time on my birthday.”

Augusta was his baby sister.

That queer little entry was made in the year 1828, when the Prince was nine years old. After that there is

a long break until 1832, by which time Prince George was resident in England.

The first entry in this second Diary, written at Brighton when the Court was at the Pavilion, is dated January 7th, and begins, in complete humility :

*"January 7th. To-day I am sorry to say I do not feel I have acted well in many respects. . . ."*

It goes on to confess that he had shown some "signs of cowardice on horseback." The fact was that H.R.H. was nervous of horses, and, reading between the lines, one is able to realize how tortured he was by his fears, and how gallantly he strove to keep them under control.

The entry goes on to say that he had had a very bad Latin lesson, and had made "many careless mistakes in it." Follows a resolution to "do all in my power" (quaint language for a child of only twelve years) to do better in future, and it ends with two very modest records of achievement : "I shot through the bull's-eye in shooting at the Target. Finished a drawing for my Aunt Gloucester."

In this section of his Diary there are constant references to his nervousness when riding, though he never actually uses those words. For instance :

*"February 18th. . . . Behaved rather cowardly during the ride. This ought not to happen again. I shall do my best to prevent it. . . ."*

*"March 9th. . . . Went out hunting with my cousin. We met at the Magpy on the London Road. I am sorry to say I was rather afraid at first, because the horse would not go quietly, but I soon found out how foolish I was, and was hardly at all afraid. . . . Yesterday two Eton boys came to see me. Their names are Ward and*

Compton. We rode together and then played at hockey. During the ride I am afraid I also showed some signs of cowardice. I do hope this will soon be over. . . .”

How tremendously significant are one or two of those phrases.

“*I shall do my best to prevent it.*” Here we can read plainly of the struggle of the gallant spirit over the weaker flesh—and how fierce and wearing that struggle was is demonstrated by that infinitely pathetic: “*I do hope this will soon be over . . . !*” One can deduce the makings of a real hero—forcing himself to do the thing he is so frightened of doing, and striving nobly not to show any signs of his fear before others.

Another significant fact about this early Diary is the writer’s complete and absolute honesty with himself. A philosopher once said: “The man who is absolutely honest with himself is in no wise likely to treat others differently!”

It will be noticed that the Prince, in his Diary, makes no attempt to use euphemisms, nor does he in any way try to gloss over any of the faults in himself which he mentions.

For instance: “. . . Yesterday I was violent, hasty, and indeed might almost say I did everything that was wrong . . . !” (This is followed by the usual—and quite evidently sincere—resolution: “I shall, however, to-day give myself the greatest pains to behave well.”) . . . “Did not behave very well in the morning, but better afterwards. . . .” (It will here be seen that the boy was not suffering from what we should call to-day an “inferiority complex”—he was quite prepared to give himself modest credit when he thought it was due.)

Thus, again: “. . . Yesterday morning Mr. Wood

tried if I could construe any part of Homer I had done before, but I could not. He then suggested to me to get it up for Papa's birthday by myself, which I was very angry about at first, and behaved very ill. After some time, however, I determined not to be so foolish, and I began by doing, during the course of yesterday, 67 lines. . . ."

" . . . A desire to chatter always brings me into trouble. . . ."

" *March 1st (1834).* Another month gone by. Have I been diligent enough, or behaved in it as I ought? I fear that but too often I have not. Chattering is one of my chief faults. . . ."

" *March 4th.* My most glaring fault now is that I desire to argue with everybody, and then after all I am generally in the wrong. I must now however make up my mind to conquer it. . . ."

" *March 13th.* Yesterday I again fell into that bad fault of mine to form hasty opinions, and speak hastily rather than first thinking them over in my mind, and saying my ideas quietly. I am then generally obliged to retract them, which will become a very unfortunate thing hereafter. I must really take great pains to avoid this. . . ."

" *April 11th.* I fear I have got into a very bad habit of going into the drawing-room not straight to the Queen, which is very vulgar and ill-behaved. I likewise, when I have saluted, have gone away and not returned sometimes until I have gone away. These faults must be avoided. . . ."

And so it goes on right through the earlier part of the Diary. One cannot fail to be impressed with this young

boy's absolute honesty with himself about his faults. That he should be aware of them, and admit them, is in itself remarkable !

How many boys of fifteen years will you find, to-day or at any other period in history, who will admit even to themselves that they are the possessors of such faults as cowardice, rudeness, forming hasty opinions, or over-talkativeness ? Or, if they *should* admit any of them, how many excuses will they not find for themselves ?

Prince George admitted all his faults—of all those of which he was aware. And he is scarcely likely to have missed any, since one can gather that, from time to time, he indulged in very earnest introspective investigation in order to ascertain whether he had formed any new ones, and how he was progressing in his struggle to conquer the old (" . . . *Have I been diligent enough, or behaved . . . as I ought . . . ?*" )

And nowhere in the Diary will be found the slightest attempt on his part to excuse himself, even to himself !

He says that he has been hasty and ill-tempered. But he does not say : " But So-and-so irritated me beyond endurance," or " So-and-so was so silly," or make any attempt to find any of the numberless and ingenious excuses which the average boy of his age would find in order to defend himself from any charge of bad conduct.

In another part of the Diary, at about the same date, he mentions a conversation with Mr. Wood, his tutor, on the subject of Saints, in the course of which Mr. Wood put forward the theory that we are inclined to classify all people who are a trifle better than ourselves as saints.

And then :

" . . . He asked if among a party of young men, some of them asked me to get drunk when I knew it was wrong, whether I should refuse to get drunk with the chance of

being called a Saint or not, which I hesitated to answer, although there should have been no hesitation . . . !”

The naïve frankness of this confession to self is little less than superb !

To sum up, then, this aspect of the early Diary, one is impressed by the fact that here is a young boy, the victim of a number of faults—none of them very serious—fully aware of them, and desperately anxious to conquer them. It may be held that this anxiety was due to the fact that Prince George might well have come to the Throne of England, and was striving—very rightly—to perfect himself for that great responsibility. But this suggestion is rather discounted by an entry in the Diary under the date of May 28th, 1834 :

“. . . What a very disagreeable thing it must be to be a king ! May I never be one, but if one must be one, study the welfare of your people and behave in a manner just, religious and true.”

This seems to show not only that H.R.H. did not want to become a king, but also that he thought there was little chance of such a thing coming to pass.

One is left, therefore, with the conviction that this very remarkable boy was striving diligently and earnestly to mould his character not into that of a good king, or even of a good prince, but simply of a good man !

## CHAPTER III

### THE PRINCE GROWS UP

AFTER the year 1834 the Prince's Diary becomes rather less valuable as a guide to his real character, and for this it would seem we must blame his tutor, Mr. Wood.

After going through the whole of the Diaries so far written he pronounced the later entries for 1834 to be "very childish and bad." One is a little inclined to wonder what this good gentleman expected from a mere boy of fifteen, if not childishness? And as for the badness . . . ?

The proof of the pudding is said to be in the eating. Let us, then, take the last entry in the Diary for 1834—presumably one of the entries with which Mr. Wood found fault on the score of its childishness and badness.

Fittingly enough it is written on the last day of the year, and it reads as follows :

" *December 31st.* To-day is the last day of the year. Alas! how rapidly time flies, and what a serious thought it is that that which is once gone can never be recalled. Have I so spent the last year that I have had no reason to regret the past? The next year will bring about a great change in my life. I am to be confirmed, and after that I shall begin to consider myself more of a man. Great may be the changes that are awaiting us, for we are living in extraordinary times. *Good-bye, Old Year!*"

Now, if the good Mr. Wood could find anything either bad or childish in such words and thoughts from a lad of fifteen—then he must have far greater insight than the majority of people !

Let us compare this—the free and unfettered expression of the boy's thoughts at the moment—with what is presumably the first entry made in the new Diary for 1835, *after* Mr. Wood had taken over the “supervision” of it :

“*Diary, January 15th.* There is no greater duty involving on children than to obey their parents, and the child should not even think that he knew better than they. Mr. Wood explained to me yesterday that the reason why this bad habit of disobedience had increased so much of late years is that children very often receive now a better education than their parents, and in consequence think that they may—with impunity—follow their own ideas rather than those of their parents.”

One can hardly feel that the substitution of this copy-book stuff (true though it may be) is in any way an improvement upon the free and untrammelled thoughts expressed in the earlier Diary !

But apparently not even the guidance of Mr. Wood in this matter of writing up his Diary could entirely do away with Prince George's frankness in regard to his faults and shortcomings.

One notes that in January, 1835, the Prince is still struggling with his inhibition in regard to horses. As, for instance :

“*January 22nd.* I hope I shall soon conquer my old fault of not liking to leap. Yesterday in riding-school I certainly hesitated taking the bar for a short time, but at length mastered myself and went over. It is indeed

of the greatest importance to me to get over this fault, for nothing is so bad as to have the reputation of a coward, which if I do not take care I fear I shall have."

" *January 29th.* In the course of the day, Lord Howe's little girl rode one of the Queen's large horses, which she had never seen before, and without saying anything she mounted and cantered about the riding-school. It struck my mind with shame to see so little a girl ride without any fear a new and very tall horse, whereas I am always very nervous when I have to ride a new one, and generally ask a great many questions."

And so the struggle went on, and it is to be noted that, if the Prince had not conquered his nervousness, neither had his nervousness conquered *him*.

It is said that Prince George was very fond of his tutor, Mr. Wood, but on one occasion at least, when the tutor went for a holiday, H.R.H. wrote that while he was very sorry to lose him, he was likely to find a great deal of satisfaction in " the idea of being my own master for a short time " !

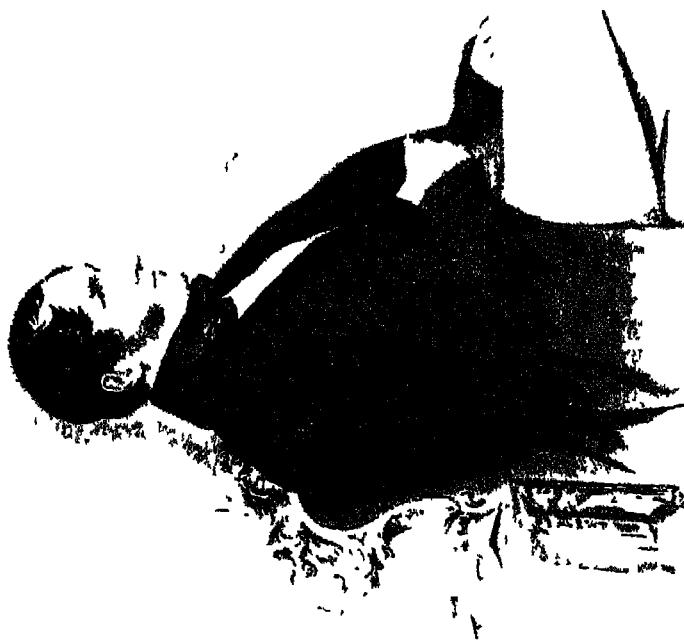
In those days Prince George had a very great liking for music, and a desire to be able to play some instrument himself. Actually he learned to play both the organ and the pianoforte, but, on hearing that piano-playing was generally regarded as an effeminate accomplishment, he gave it up.

H.R.H. also took a considerable interest in the Turf. In his Diary, under the date of June 5th, we find the following :

" Yesterday we went to Epsom, and a very pretty sight we had. The road was crowded with carriages and foot passengers. At 3 o'clock the race commenced, but they made several false starts. At length they came on



KING GEORGE IV  
From the sketch in oils, by Sir Thomas Lawrence



H M LEOPOLD I, KING OF THE BELGIANS  
From a portrait by Diez



in capital style, and at a sharp pace, Trim leading, but presently Ibrahim took the lead, which he however soon lost, for Mundry and Ascot soon were before him, and the former won cleverly by half a neck, Ascot being second, and Ibrahim third. There were not quite so many people there as yesterday, but yet an immense number. . . .”

It is interesting to note the true sporting phraseology (“. . . they came on in capital style . . .”) and in these days one encounters worse descriptions of a race from the pens of professional sports-writers.

H.R.H. made a point, whenever possible, of attending all the principal race-meetings, and entered in his Diary the names of the winning horses, as well as particulars of the race and details of the betting.

In the Diary, under June 7th, we find another naïve self-confession :

“. . . I regret to say that I have still one great fault, which I cannot at present get the better of, and that is that desire, if I may call it, of doing nothing at odd moments. . . .”

Not, after all, such an unusual desire with most people.

A little later in the Diary he mentions that, after some little outbreak on his part, Mr. Wood read him a rather severe lesson “relative to my conduct, and particularly about riding.” (One is compelled to feel that Mr. Wood, though no doubt a most excellent preceptor in many ways, was afflicted at times with a very limited vision). And then went on to mention that his parents, the Duke and Duchess, were very anxious about him. At which His Royal Highness retorted :

“That's my look-out !”

In his Diary he adds the comment : “ . . . an expression which is anything but proper on such an occasion.”

Another interesting touch is his comment on the subjects of being confirmed and receiving the Garter. He writes :

“ . . . The former is a most solemn and awful engagement which I take in the eyes of God to be responsible for my own sins ; the latter is a great honour which, as I have not actually deserved, I must merit by my own conduct . . . ! ”

The confirmation Cerernony took place on August 8th, 1835, and the Investiture of the Order of the Garter on the 15th, at Windsor. Both ceremonies went off entirely successfully, but both seem to have been regarded by H.R.H. as somewhat trying ordeals.

Soon after this the Duchess of Cambridge, who had been staying at Windsor, left with her two daughters for Hanover. Shortly after that the Prince himself left Windsor, accompanied by Mr. Wood, for a tour through England and Wales.

This trip seems to have afforded His Royal Highness both pleasure and interest. He wrote a particular journal of this tour, his experiences and impressions, and in his Diary he makes this comment :

“ . . . I have, however, come to the conclusion that England is a most beautiful and flourishing country, and that it is very wrong that people always go abroad to travel, whereas they ought first to see their own country . . . ! ”

In April, 1836, His Royal Highness sat for his portrait, which was done in oils by John Lucas.

In it we see him in naval uniform, with a cloak draped

loosely round his shoulders, and with the Star of the Order of the Garter on his breast.

The face is a very interesting one. The cheeks are boyishly chubby and the chin rounded. The mouth, while extremely sensitive, is yet firm. The ears, large and standing well from the head, denote a good and honest character. The eyes are those of a thinker and a dreamer, yet seem to hold in their depths the promise of a great deal more than mere dreaminess. The suggestion of a temper and a will of his own, which we have already found in the Diary, is confirmed by the thick, strong, and well-arched eyebrows.

It is a handsome face, the face of a boy likely to develop into a man who will do things and will get things done, and who will command the love and admiration of his fellows.

## CHAPTER IV

### CHARLOTTE—THE REBELLIOUS PRINCESS

**I**N a world where men seem fated to pursue and to worship, to fight and to die for ideals almost invariably based on myths and chimeras, disappointment and frustration must necessarily be the ultimate lot of many. And to none of them does this frustration and disappointment come earlier, or last more persistently, than to the devotee of Liberty.

For this Liberty is, perhaps, the greatest myth of them all. Until only one surviving human entity is left in the world, there can be no such thing as real Liberty. There are degrees of dependence and servitude, that is all. Yet it is the chimera in the pursuit and defence of which the greatest men and women, from time immemorial, have devoted their energies and sacrificed their health, their happiness, and their lives.

The prisoner who is an apostle of Liberty is in a parlous state—the slave in yet a worse one. The individual who is dependent on others for his welfare, his comfort, his very life, cannot enjoy any very great liberty—yet he has more than has the person upon whom the welfare of many others is dependent.

Thus it is that, bad as may be the condition of the captive or the slave in regard to this matter of Liberty, yet their restricting chains and bars and bolts, though more apparent, do not fret them so much as do the more nebulous, but infinitely more real bonds and trammels of the ruling classes.

Of all the worshippers and apostles of the elusive god of Liberty it may safely be said that none have so much to endure—none are so persistently frustrated, as are the members of a Royal House, who sit close to the very throne itself.

Such an one was Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte, the only child of the Prince Regent and heir to the Crown of England, who was born in 1797, and died on November 6th, 1817, after twenty years of what might be described as a hectic, and at times an exciting life, but which could, by no stretch of imagination, be called a happy one.

The early part of her life had been passed in an atmosphere of family quarrels which, while they would have been distressing and sordid enough in a suburban home, became doubly so in the incongruous setting of a Royal Palace.

Her mother was wild and eccentric ; her father was eccentric and selfish ; and both of them have been aptly described by biographers and historians as disreputable. But undoubtedly both were, by nature, what we should describe in modern jargon as "Bohemians"—and there is no doubt but that the Princess Charlotte inherited this side of their character.

So, from her very earliest days, she had always a wild and passionate longing for liberty, and, in the natural course of events, she got less of it than even the most obscure proletarian wage-slaves over whom her father ruled. Her father was heir to the throne, and she, his only child, was the next in succession. For such there cannot be any sort of real personal liberty !

She was impulsive, passionate, vehement, capricious—always ready and eager to assert herself and to kick against the pricks. She was, in fact, in every respect what we should to-day describe as "temperamental,"

and her instinct was always to rebel and to fight, be the cause never so hopeless.

Quite early in life she was taken from her disreputable mother, and left in the care of her equally disreputable and even more selfish father. There is little doubt but that she proved a grievous thorn in his side, and the moment she was old enough—i.e. at seventeen years of age—he adopted the time-honoured method of getting rid of refractory daughters, and announced to her that she was to marry the Prince of Orange.

This Charlotte had no particular desire to do, but she apparently felt that any sort of change would be welcome, and that as the Princess of Orange and a married woman she would possibly enjoy greater liberty than as the Princess Augusta Charlotte of England. So, doubtless to her father's surprise and gratification, she consented, if not with enthusiasm, at least without creating a scene, or even putting up any opposition.

But a decided change took place in her feelings very soon after, for she quite suddenly and unexpectedly fell violently in love with Prince Augustus of Prussia.

A clandestine love affair followed, from which, no doubt, the Princess got her joy and her thrills. These might have been lessened had she been aware of the fact that Prince Augustus had already contracted a morganatic marriage. But he, also apparently enjoying the affair, did not enlighten her, and nobody else did. So it remained a case of “where ignorance is bliss. . . .”

One effect of this love affair was to make the Princess view her approaching marriage with the Prince of Orange in a very different light. She was too clever to put up any sort of open resistance to it or to display any signs of wanting to break the engagement, knowing full well that if she made any move of that sort her father would immediately take steps to hasten the marriage.

Instead of that she became an obstructionist, and schemed very cleverly to spin out the negotiations for the union as long as possible.

And then, into this already complicated situation, there walked the handsome young Prince Leopold of Saxe-Cobourg.

He visited the English Court in company with the Allied Sovereigns, who were celebrating their victory over Napoleon Bonaparte.

When he met the Princess Charlotte it became at once a case of “I came—I saw and I was conquered!” He fell as violently in love with her as she had done with the Prince Augustus.

But she, being still in the throes of that passionate affair, had no eyes even for the handsome Prince Leopold, for a soft glance from whose eyes all the other ladies were sighing their hearts out. She treated him with a cold indifference which, of course, merely had the effect of inflaming his love. It was a new experience for him to find a woman who was cold to his warmth, indifferent to his enthusiasm!

A week or so after the arrival of the Prince, the Regent's suspicions were aroused by the attitude of his daughter in regard to her marriage with the Prince of Orange. He had her watched, and very soon discovered her secret—that she was meeting the Prince Augustus clandestinely.

Like the Demon King in the pantomime the Prince Regent appeared suddenly upon the scene. He summarily dismissed the whole of her household, and then said to her:

“And now, my dear, since you do not seem to have yet learned how to behave with the dignity of a princess, you will go immediately to Windsor Park, and remain there in the strictest seclusion until you have that necessary lesson word-perfect!”

She stared at her father in the coldest contempt:

“Dignity of a princess, indeed!” she cried. “And

when, pray, have you ever set me the example by showing me the dignity of a prince ? ”

Whereupon he took the wind out of her sails, not by flying into a rage, as she expected him to do, but by merely giving her a cold smile and answering :

“ Two wrongs never yet made a right, my dear child. So to Windsor you go, and at once ! ”

By way of reply the Princess astonishingly went down on her knees, clasped her hands, and cried aloud, on an almost hysterical note :

“ God Almighty, grant me patience ! ”

And then, while her father was still gaping in astonishment at this amazing outburst, she sprang to her feet and ran from the room.

The Regent naturally imagined that she had gone to weep in the seclusion of her own apartment, after the time-honoured manner of young ladies whose secret love affairs have been discovered and frustrated by their tyrannical fathers. It was not until some time later that he discovered that she had utterly and completely vanished from the palace !

What she had actually done on leaving her father was to run straight down the servants' staircase and out of the back entrance, where she hailed a passing cab and had herself driven to her mother's house in Bayswater.

When they arrived outside that residence she said to the cabman :

“ Just one moment, and I will send your fare out to you. I have no money on me ! ”

The cabby, feeling a little doubtful about this wild-looking and decidedly agitated young woman, said :

“ All right, miss—but be smart about it. Don't forget, time's money—and don't play no monkey tricks, neither.”

At this she flew into a rage, and exclaimed :

“ How dare you ! Do you not know who I am ? I am the Princess Charlotte ! ”

At which the man burst into a guffaw, and replied :

“ Why, yes—of course ! And I am the Lord Mayor’s coachman, and this ‘ere is ‘is best state coach. But I wants me fare, all the same for that ! ”

It was not long before the Regent discovered his daughter’s refuge, and was exceedingly annoyed thereby. He would not go for her himself, but sent a deputation consisting of the Dukes of Sussex and York, Lord Brougham, and the Bishop of Salisbury, to reason with her. At first she would have none of them, but eventually, by means of threats and persuasions, they succeeded in getting her to return to Carlton House in the small hours of the morning.

Thereafter she was packed off to solitary confinement at Windsor. But there was something of a family scandal over the affair, and the negotiations with the Prince of Orange came to an abrupt conclusion. Prince Augustus, also, found urgent business to occupy him elsewhere.

Then Prince Leopold stepped into the gap. His task was not a hard one, for it would seem that the Regent’s great desire was to get his rebellious daughter off his hands and on to those of any reasonably suitable spouse.

The Prince, who had a certain way with him, soon managed to ingratiate himself with the Regent, and enrolled the Princess’s uncle, the Duke of Kent, on his side. After all he was a handsome, distinguished young man, who had earned great credit in the campaign against Napoleon, and who might one day occupy a throne !

Soon after the Battle of Waterloo he was officially invited to England, and presumably at last found favour in the sight of the Rebellious Princess, for they were married in May, 1816.

## CHAPTER V

### CHARLOTTE—THE SUBMISSIVE WIFE

**I**T is said that people of diverse character usually enjoy happier married life than those whose natures are similar.

If this is so, the married life of the Prince and Princess of Saxe-Cobourg should have been more successful than its short duration seems to have indicated.

The Prince was a totally different character from his wife in almost every way. She was hot and vehement. He was cold and formal. She was wildly impulsive ; he was logical, calculating, and careful in action. He had won distinction both as a soldier and a diplomatist on these characteristics, and it may be that they were well fitted for the control of a wife such as the Princess Charlotte turned out to be.

There seems no reason to suppose that the love at first sight which was engendered in the bosom of the Prince for his wilful and rebellious Princess when he saw her at the State ball during his initial visit to England, was shocked out of existence—all the known facts point very much to the contrary. But that it *was* shocked there can be no manner of doubt.

Her impulsiveness caused him annoyance ; her apparently almost reasonless fits of semi-hysterical laughter, alternating with wild, stamping rages, irritated him, and her notoriously bad manners caused him embarrassment.

For a while the establishment at Esher, where the Royal pair took up their residence, resembled somewhat in atmosphere her parents' home in the days before the Prince Regent and his wife were separated. Constant quarrels, noisy on her part, cold on his, were the order of the day ; the hot waves of her temperament beating tempestuously, but vainly, against the cold, hard rock of his, until at last they were broken by it, and we are told that a moment came when, with flaming cheeks and sparkling eyes, she faced him " like a rebellious boy in petticoats," her body pushed forward, her hands behind her back, and said :

" Whatever you want me to do I will do—if you *wish* it, I will *do* it ! "

To which he replied, in his usual quiet, even tones :

" I want nothing for myself. When I press something on you, it is from a conviction that it is for your interest and for your good ! "<sup>1</sup>

Another trait which the Princess possessed in contradistinction to her husband was a habit of making both friends and enemies almost on sight, and with that blind impulsiveness which was so much part of her nature.

In this way she became very friendly indeed with a young German physician named Christian Stockmar. This young man had been brought over to England by Prince Leopold. He was the son of some minor official in Coburg, and, after serving as a medical officer during the Napoleonic War, he had decided to take up practice in that town. But Prince Leopold, who took a fancy to the young man, and appreciated his services during the recent war, suggested that on his marriage the young doctor should come over to England and act as his own

<sup>1</sup> Stockmar, 87-90.

and his wife's personal physician, which Stockmar was glad enough to do.

Princess Charlotte took to him immediately, and very soon he was her most intimate friend in the household of Claremont, as their residence at Esher was called. It is said that she took to calling him "Stocky," and that they used to romp like two children all over the house. They were, of course, both very young.

It has also been said that Stockmar was in love with the Princess, but if that is so there is no doubt that his love for her was of the purest and most honourable nature. He was content to worship from afar, so far as anything beyond friendship went.

He says in his Diary that the Prince was "the best of all husbands in all the five quarters of the globe," and that his wife, the Princess, bore him "an amount of love, the greatness of which can only be compared with the British National Debt."

Whatever his feelings towards her when, a few months after the marriage, it was definitely decided that the Princess was *enceinte*, and he was immediately offered the position of one of her physicians-in-ordinary, he politely but firmly refused it—a refusal which, one feels, he must have bitterly regretted, as things turned out.

Near as those times are to our own—little more than a century separating them—the pre-natal treatment of expectant mothers was then very different, and in many ways amazingly ignorant and crude.

It was not long before Doctor Stockmar, as one imagines, watching his Royal mistress with an anxious and expert eye, became seriously alarmed. After some natural hesitation, he even went so far as to draw his master's attention to his anxiety and the cause of it.

"Your Highness," he ventured when opportunity arose,

and they were alone together, "I will ask you to believe that it is with the greatest hesitation, and only after the most careful thought, that I speak to you as I am doing. The fact is, sir, that I am by no means satisfied with Her Royal Highness's health, nor with the manner of her treatment!"

"Indeed?" said the Prince, coldly. "Must I remind you, then, that you might have had the opportunity of actively participating in the care of her yourself, had you wished to?"

"That is true, Your Highness, but it does not alter facts. I still do not consider that she is having proper treatment!"

"And what is your complaint?" the Prince asked, with a note of sarcasm in his voice which the young Doctor chose to ignore.

"I think, Your Highness," was his answer, "that the course of low dieting, and the constant bleeding to which the Princess is being subjected, is an error. I feel convinced that it will tend to lower her vitality too much, which is likely to result in a serious weakening of her powers of resistance just when she will have need of them, and which may, eventually, prove actually dangerous!"

"Are you aware," suggested the Prince, on whom, nevertheless, the young doctor's grave statement had had its effect, "that the physicians who are attending Her Royal Highness are all older, and more experienced men than yourself, Stockmar?"

"That may be so," was the firm reply, "but I venture to retain my opinion. They have, I think, a proverb in this country which says that it is the looker-on who sees most of the game. In this instance, I am the looker-on!"

The Prince was sufficiently impressed by Stockmar's suggestion to convey it to the physicians in attendance

on the Princess, but he was undiplomatic enough to let it be known from whence the suggestion came. This was, of course, enough to make the other doctors laugh at it right away, and the lowering treatment was continued.

On November 5th, 1817, the Princess was, after a long and arduous labour, delivered of a dead boy. At midnight her strength, previously badly deteriorated by the treatment she had been having, failed her. Precisely what young Stockmar had feared came to pass.

In despair, the Prince came to Stockmar, apologized for the way he had received his warning, and begged him to see her.

Stockmar hurried to the sick-room—this was at about midnight—and found the other doctors hovering round the bed and plying the patient with wine. At a glance he saw it was too late for him to do anything for her. He sat with her for some time, and the Prince, who had been on tenterhooks for hours, felt that now everything would be all right, and went to his own room to rest.

The Princess had been dozing, but presently she aroused herself, looked at Stockmar, and smiled faintly. Then she said :

“ Oh, Stocky—they’ve been making me tipsy ! ”

She took his hand in both her own and pressed it convulsively. Looking at her, he realized that the end was near, and rushed from the room to call the Prince.

But before he had passed through the adjoining room he heard her calling :

“ Oh, Stocky—Stocky . . . ! ”

Her voice was loud and urgent, and he turned and hurried back. But before he reached the bedside she was in her death-throes.

Stockmar straightened the twisted body, and reverently

closed the eyes. Then he went to tell the Prince what had happened.

At first Leopold refused to believe it. He was dazed with watching and from the brief sleep he had just enjoyed.

But at last he was made to realize that his beloved wife was really dead. As he and Stockmar hurried along the corridors to the room of death, Prince Leopold suddenly hesitated. Then he sank into an adjacent chair, and, with a groan, lowered his head on to his hands.

“ It is all a dream—a nightmare ! This is impossible ! ” The Prince murmured.

Stockmar dropped to his knees beside his master and laid a gentle hand upon him :

“ Alas, sir, pull yourself together ! It is no dream—no fantasy. It is, why heaven help us, only too true ! ”

Without a word the Prince rose to his feet, and, holding himself to his full height, hurried on to the room where she lay. At sight of the still form he caught his breath—then dropped on his knees beside the bed and passionately kissed the cold, white hands.

Stockmar stood, silent and motionless as a carved statue, at the foot of the bed.

For some time the Prince knelt there, the tears running, unchecked, down his cheeks. At last he rose slowly, stood for a moment staring before him as though dazed, and then, becoming aware of Stockmar standing there, he suddenly abandoned all restraint and, throwing himself into the young man’s arms, cried :

“ Now I am quite desolate ! Promise me that you will never leave me ! ”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Stockmar, *Biographische Skizze*.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE BIRTH OF A QUEEN

THE death of Princess Charlotte had a startling effect upon the Court circle in England—an effect which even had its repercussions amongst the Continental Royalty as well.

The succession to the British Throne, hitherto nicely cut and dried, was now all in the air once more, and no one could see precisely what was likely to happen.

King George III was still alive, a senile lunatic. None of his sons had any legitimate offspring, and all of them were getting on in years.

The idea of the Regent divorcing his wife, marrying again, and having a son was discussed, but was not regarded very seriously. Medical advice was to the effect that the Regent had lived a far too dissipated life to make the procreation of a child, at his age, even a faint possibility. Moreover it was felt that should such a thing happen, the populace would almost certainly think there had been some hocus-pocus about it.

The remaining sons of King George, in their order of precedence towards the succession, were as follows :

- The Duke of York.
- The Duke of Clarence.
- The Duke of Kent.
- The Duke of Cumberland.
- The Duke of Sussex.
- The Duke of Cambridge.

The Regent being, then, ruled out (Creevey writes of him at this period: "Prinny has let loose his belly, which now reaches to his knees: otherwise he is said to be well!") attention focused first upon the Duke of York. This Prince had done with sowing his wild oats—of which there had been a quantity—and had been for many years married to the Princess Royal of Prussia, who seems to have been a highly eccentric lady. There was no issue from the union, and, apparently, no likelihood of any.

The Duke of Clarence, on the other hand, had quite a large family. But, unfortunately, they were not legitimate, being the offspring by the Duke of a Mrs. Jordan, an actress with whom he had lived for many years.

The Duke of Cumberland was extremely unpopular in all circles. He was ugly, bad-tempered, vindictive, and politically an extreme reactionary. All sorts of highly unpleasant scandals were attached to his name<sup>1</sup> and, though he was married to a German Princess, he had no issue.

The Duke of Sussex was of a very studious nature, and something of a recluse. He married twice—first the Lady Augusta Murray, by whom he had two children, and afterwards Lady Cecilia Underwood (*née* Buggin). But both these marriages were declared void under the Royal Marriages Act, and so the children were, of course barred the succession.

Mention has already been made of the effect of the death of Princess Charlotte on the Duke of Cambridge and his future.

In addition to his sons, George III had five daughters still alive. Two of these, the Queen of Wurtemberg and the Duchess of Gloucester, were married but without

<sup>1</sup> Creevey, Vol. I, 148. Stockmar, 95. Greville, 1, 228.

issue or apparent hope of same. The remaining three were middle-aged spinsters.

King George's fourth son was Edward, Duke of Kent. He was fifty years of age at this time, and, although somewhat obese, was perhaps the healthiest and strongest (in every way) of all the King's sons.

He had chosen to follow a military career, and had pursued it with great seriousness, so that he had acquired some reputation as a disciplinarian. But if he could manage others, he showed a rather woeful inability to control his own affairs, for, despite an income of £24,000 per annum, he was always hopelessly in debt.

At this time he was off the active list, living more or less a private life, and devoting himself largely to his queer hobby of designing clocks.

He also took some interest in politics. He had quarrelled with most of his brothers, and, possibly for that reason, had become something of a Radical. He took a considerable interest in industrial affairs, and one of his greatest friends was Robert Owen, the first introducer of Socialism and co-operation into this country. The Duke was in constant correspondence with him, and even presided at at least one of his public meetings.

It was upon the Duke of Kent that the attention of those directly interested in the succession to the throne turned most hopefully. He was mentally and physically the strongest and most virile of the King's sons, and, although well into middle age, there would be every hope of an heir if he married the right lady.

Rumours of this, of course, reached the Duke, and he immediately gave his position the most serious consideration—though it would seem largely from the more selfish point of view.

Eventually he sent for Mr. Creevey to ask his advice—



QUEEN ADELAIDE  
From the painting by Sir William Beechey.



and also to assure that his views should not fail to reach the right quarters. Mr. Creevey, it may be said, was an arrant gossip, and was also a diarist—though it is doubtful if the Duke realized this when he sought his help, and revealed himself so completely to him.

The Duke seems to have put the situation to Mr. Creevey with considerable plainness, pointing out that if the Duke of Clarence failed to marry, or, having married, failed to have any issue, then the next in the line of succession was himself. That being so, he suggested that it was his duty to marry, but, said he : “ God only knows the sacrifice it will be to make, whenever I shall think it my duty to become a married man ! ”

He went on to speak of his twenty-seven years' connection with Madame St. Laurent, with whom he had lived during the whole of that period, and the terrible blow it would be, not only to him, but to her, if after so long they were compelled to separate.

He mentioned an incident when Madame St. Laurent, coming upon a paragraph in the English *Morning Chronicle*, which mentioned the possibility of the Duke marrying, had gone into hysterics over it.

“ Two names,” went on the Duke, “ have been mentioned in connection with my possible marriage—those of the Princess of Baden and the Princess of Saxe-Coburg. Personally, I think the latter would be the more suitable, since Prince Leopold is so much in the public eye, and is so popular with the nation ! ”

He seems to have discussed the matter (if Mr. Creevey is to be believed) with much the manner of a farmer contemplating the purchase of some prize cattle !

He then came down to what seems to have been the real point of his interview with Mr. Creevey—the financial side of the matter.

Madame St. Laurent, he suggested, must most certainly have a reasonable pension—from no point of view would it be advisable that she should be left, after having been his faithful mistress for so many years, to the humiliation of poverty.

“As for myself,” said the Duke, modestly, “I shall not require very much. But, of course, a position will have to be kept up, and a certain number of carriages, servants and so on will be essential. In this matter I think the marriage of the Duke of York should be taken as a precedent. That was, as this will be, a marriage for the succession. In the case of the Duke of York the sum of £25,000 per annum in addition to all his other income was settled on him purely on that account. I shall be contented with the same arrangement, without making any demands grounded on the difference between the value of money in 1792 and at present! As for the payment of my debts—well, I don’t call them great. The nation, on the contrary, is greatly my debtor!”

And at this point, which seems to have been the really important one, the Duke stood up and dismissed Mr. Creevey!

The latter gentleman, of course, went straight off and reported the whole of the interview to the Duke of Wellington, who was so amused about it, that he immediately wrote to Lord Sefton to tell him of it.

This letter was received by Lord Sefton and read by him while his physician was in the process of examining his bladder for the possible presence of a stone, and it is said that the medico was greatly astonished that his patient should suddenly burst into a gargantuan roar of laughter just at the conclusion of a not very comfortable operation.

Lord Sefton, in his reply to the Duke of Wellington, wrote :

“ . . . Nothing could be more first-rate than the Royal Edward’s ingenuousness. One does not know which to admire most—the delicacy of his attachments to Madame St. Laurent, the refinement of his sentiments towards the Duke of Clarence, or his own perfect disinterestedness in pecuniary matters. . . . ”<sup>1</sup>

Eventually, both the Duke of Clarence and the Duke of Kent married. It has been suggested that the latter, who seems to have had a strong streak of superstition in his character, did so mainly because of what an old gipsy woman had told him, years before, when he was in command at Gibraltar. The old crone had prophesied that he “ would have losses and crosses, but die in happiness, and that his daughter would become a great Queen.”<sup>2</sup>

But whether this was so or not, the Duke of Kent duly married the Princess of Saxe-Coburg, while the Duke of Clarence espoused the daughter of the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen.

The Princess Victoria Mary Louisa, as the new Duchess of Kent was named, was thirty-two years of age, and in appearance can only be described as “ homely,” for she was short and plump to the point of stoutness, with brown eyes and hair. But what she lacked in looks she made up for in health and vitality, for she had the apple-red cheeks of a countrywoman, and was both cheerful and garrulous at most times. She also had the habit of dressing somewhat ornately, in silks, satins, and velvets of the brightest hues.

She was a widow at the time she married the Duke

<sup>1</sup> Creevey, 267-271.

<sup>2</sup> Strachey, p. 17.

and had had a somewhat chequered career. She was a member of one of the oldest and most famous houses of Europe—the Wettins—and of what was known as the Ernestine branch of that family.

Her father had been the Duke Francis of Saxe-Coburg, ruler of the little duchy which, with a population some sixty thousand strong, possessed independent and sovereign rights.

At the age of seventeen and in the year 1803, the young Princess Victoria had married the impoverished Prince of Leiningen, who ruled over the territory of Amorbach, in Lower Franconia. She lived there with him in a state which, for a Royal house, was little more than one of beggary.

Nor were her own family any better off, for the Duchy of Saxe-Coburg suffered sadly during the French wars, being harrowed and pillaged and plundered time and time again, until the country-side was as bare of crops or cattle as the desert of the Sahara.

Three years after her marriage, the Princess's father, Duke Francis, died, a ruined and broken-hearted man, leaving the ducal family on the verge of starvation. But Prince Leopold, as we have seen, carved out a career for himself and finally married the heiress to the British throne, with the tragic result previously mentioned.

His sister bore her husband two children, and in her household at Amorbach may be said to have “worn the trousers,” for her husband, the Prince, was not a very dynamic personality. In 1814 he died, leaving her a very practical, self-reliant person indeed, with the regency and two lusty children on her hands.

When her brother, Prince Leopold, married the Princess Charlotte, it was suggested to her that she should marry the Duke of Kent, but she refused point-

blank, saying that she had quite enough to do to look after her children and her little kingdom, and rather hinting that she had had enough of marriage !

However, with the death of the young Princess Charlotte affairs looked rather different, and when proposals were made to her on behalf of the Duke she was disposed to consider them, and finally agreed to marry him.

The Duke did not find his marriage quite such a profitable speculation as he had anticipated, for after quite a lot of stormy discussion, the utmost that Parliament would do was to increase his annuity by a matter of £6000 !

The result of this was that the Duke lived, without either much style or comfort, on the Continent, and the early part of the new Duchess's second married life was little more restful or comfortable than her first !

Eventually he settled down at Amorbach, where he found time hanging rather heavily on his hands. Then, in a moment as it were, the whole complexion of things changed. The Princess informed him that she was *enceinte*, and the Duke immediately made up his mind that it was essential that the expected child should be born in England. The gipsy's prophecy was still strongly in the forefront of his mind, and he was determined that everything should be in absolute order !

Money was short, but the Duke hired a carriage, and himself sat on the box. The inside passengers were the Duchess, her daughter Feodora, and maids, lap-dogs, canaries, and what-not.

Off they drove—on that amazing journey—jolting through Germany and France, contending bravely with roads that were little more than swamps, and inns where the food and drink and accommodation alike were bad.

But neither of them were in the least discouraged by

such trifles ! The French coast was reached, and the channel crossed. In London the Royal pair were provided with a suite of rooms in Kensington Palace, and there, on May 24th, 1819, the Duchess, without too much trouble, was safely delivered of a girl child.

The Duchess was disappointed. She had wanted a boy—an indisputable heir to the Throne. But the Duke was delighted. Had not the gipsy said that his daughter should be a great queen ? No mention had been made of a son !

However, at the time of her birth, there seemed to be no great probability of the little girl ever occupying a throne. So little indeed, that in the beginning she attracted—and received—but little attention.

Previously the wife of the Duke of Clarence had given birth to a child—a daughter. The infant had died very shortly after birth, but already there were rumours that another child was on the way. And these rumours turned out to be correct.

Another point to be taken into consideration was that the Duke of Kent was, despite his age, a lusty man, and his Duchess was still quite young. A son born to them would, of course, automatically take all chance of succession from their small daughter. So in Court circles—and probably elsewhere—the birth of the little girl was regarded as of no very great importance.

But the Duke, remembering that prophecy, did not regard the child in this light at all. He said :

“ The greatest Queen who has ever reigned over this country was Queen Elizabeth. It is a name of good and great omen. It shall, then, be the name of our child ! ”

But, at the baptism, he was frustrated by his hated brother, the Regent. George, Prince of Wales, was present at the christening ceremony, and when the Archbishop

of Canterbury asked what name was to be bestowed upon the infant, the Regent replied, before his brother could get out a word :

“ Alexandrina, of course ! ”

Furious at this, but compelled to control himself, the Duke of Kent broke in with :

“ Yes, but she must have another name ! ”

“ Certainly ! ” agreed the Regent. “ What shall it be — Georgina ? ”

This was a difficult one to counter ! But the Duke stuck gallantly to his guns :

“ Or Elizabeth ? ” he suggested.

“ Very well, then,” said the Regent, calmly, “ let her be called after her mother—Victoria ! ”

And so, to the infinite annoyance of her father, the child was duly christened, Alexandrina Victoria.

## CHAPTER VII

### VICTORIA—THE LITTLE PRINCESS

QUEEN VICTORIA, as she was to become, did not start life under the best auspices for her high destiny. Her father was a disgruntled man, despite his certainty that his daughter would one day occupy the Throne of England. His main cause for discontent was what he regarded as the niggardly way Parliament had treated him in regard to money.

He unburdened some of his sorrows to his friend, Robert Owen, the Socialist leader, in a long letter of which record has been kept :

“ . . . I now candidly state that, after viewing the subject in every possible way, I am satisfied that, to continue in England, even in the quiet way in which we are going on, without splendour, and without show, nothing short of doubling the seven thousand pounds will do ; *reduction being impossible*. . . . If my services are useful to my country, it surely becomes those who have the power to support me in substantiating those just claims I have for the very extensive losses and privations I have experienced, during the very long period of my professional services in the Colonies ; and if this is not attainable, it is a clear proof to me that they are not appreciated, and under that impression I shall not scruple in due time, to resume my retirement abroad, when the Duchess and myself shall have fulfilled our duties

in establishing the *English* birth of my child, and giving it maternal nutriment on the soil of Old England ; and which we shall certainly repeat, if Providence destines to give us any further increase of family."<sup>1</sup>

In December the Duke took his family to Sidmouth, " in order that the Duchess may have the benefit of tepid sea-bathing and our infant that of the sea air. . . ."

And down there the Duke was concerned with another prophecy, wherein a fortune-teller had warned him that, in 1820, two members of the Royal Family would die.

It is characteristic of the Duke that it never occurred to him that *he* might be one of the two. He thought it over and decided that, as the King most obviously was drawing near the end of his days, and that as the Duchess of York had been attacked by a mortal disease, they would be the two to go.

But he went out for a walk and got wet, and thereafter neglected to change his clothes. By this means he contracted a bad cold, and, within a few days, inflammation of the lungs set in, and on January 22nd he died. Less than a week later his father, King George III, followed him to the grave !

And so it was that although the two prophecies the Duke set such store by both came true, he was never aware of the fact !

The two deaths in the Royal Family caused a considerable amount of confusion. The Duchess of Kent found herself actually stranded at Sidmouth, from sheer lack of funds to make the journey to London !

But her brother, Prince Leopold, came to the rescue, and conducted his sister and his niece to London, where they took up their residence at Kensington Palace.

<sup>1</sup> *Owen Journal*, I, pp. 28-9.

The Duchess, when she had time to look about her and to consider her situation, found it by no means hopeful! True, she had her own income of £6000 per year, but she had her husband's debts to cope with, and they loomed very large and black upon the financial horizon.

Doubtless she was tempted to leave this country, wherein she was an alien, and return to Amorbach, where she might bring up her daughter in peace and seclusion among the people she knew, and who knew her.

But the Duchess was a born fighter, and with all the fighter's optimism she decided that her daughter, having been born an English Princess, should be brought up as one. So she stood her ground, and her brother stood by her, even to the extent of contributing a further £3000 to the family exchequer.

At the moment the little Princess Victoria was considered of no special importance. But when, in 1821, the Duke of Clarence's second child died in infancy, the position was altered once more.

The one thing that everyone, of every class, feared was that the Duke of Cumberland should succeed to the throne, and now, as things stood, the frail life of the little Princess Victoria alone intervened between him and the country.

The Duchess of Kent stood by her husband's party. Whigs and Radicals rallied round her, and she was friendly with Lord Durham and with O'Connell as well—an attitude which required courage from the member of a Royal house in those times.

In the meantime the little Princess, who was known as "Drina" in the family circle, was brought up in strict seclusion and with the utmost care. She had no notion of the high estate that might await her, but it would seem that from her very earliest days she had a consciousness

of being rather different from the common herd. Thus we find her, at the age of six, reproving the Lady Jane Ellice, who had been allowed to play with her, for touching her toys :

“ You must not touch those,” said the small Princess, “ because they are *mine* : also while I may call you Jane, you must remember not to call me Victoria ! ”

Little Drina, in those very early days, lived in a world of her own—a small world of which she was the well-worshipped centre ; of which the outer fringe was composed of her nurses, her mother’s ladies-in-waiting—and her devoted half-sister, Feodora ; and the inner by her remarkable collection of dolls, all of them neatly and decorously dressed, and her donkey which the Duke of York had given her, and on which she used to ride along the Kensington Garden avenues. It is interesting to remember that Queen Victoria’s love of donkeys lasted throughout the whole of her long life.

In those early days there seems to be little doubt but that, despite the austerity and strictness of her mother, the little Princess was rather spoilt, and there were times when she flew into the most violent tempers, stamping her feet and defying all around her.

But when she was five years of age a new member of her little world appeared, who very soon created an almost complete change in the general atmosphere surrounding the little Princess. This lady was the Fräulein Lehzen, who was destined to play an important part in moulding the character of the future Queen.

## CHAPTER VIII

### VICTORIA—THE CHILD

OPINIONS on the character and personality of Queen Victoria as a child seem to differ considerably.

We are told that, as a very small girl, the little Princess had a vigorous and ready temper, and would fly into a passion at almost any small thing, thereafter stamping and shouting, and entirely unamenable to either overtures or threats.

When Fräulein Lehzen came to take charge of her she was five years old, and, according to Strachey, the Fräulein was literally appalled by the tantrums of her new charge :

“Never,” she is reported to have said, “have I encountered before such a passionate and naughty child !”

But Fräulein Lehzen was a woman of considerable sense, and, for the governess of her period, was an advanced psychologist. She was the daughter of an Hanoverian parson, and, at the time when she came to Kensington Palace, had already had wide experience as a governess —her last essay, an entirely successful one, being the charge of Victoria’s half-sister, the Princess Feodora, who, it may be said, turned out to be a credit to her in every way.

She was firm and very determined, but she was also,

for her age, broad-minded and tactful. It is reported of her that she once said :

“ With a horse and with a child it is the same—you can never really master either unless you first win their respect, their trust, and, above all, their affection ! ”

This was certainly the line she took with the little Victoria. For some time she watched her very closely, and interfered hardly at all with her usual routine and habits. She was able to discover at least two really good qualities in her new charge—that she was absolutely truthful—because she *loved* truth—and that she was of a very fond and affectionate disposition, although her affections could not be won easily, nor were to be bartered for a box of sweets or a few favours.

So, in accordance with her theory, the Fräulein first set herself to win both the respect and affection of her little charge, and not only very soon succeeded, but retained that regard for as long as she lived. Thereafter, with a firm but gentle hand, she set herself to mould the character of the little Princess, and there is no doubt that we owe to the untiring efforts of this good lady the character of the woman who, whatever her faults, was undoubtedly one of the greatest and most remarkable monarchs who have ever occupied the throne of this country.

Some little time before the arrival of the Fräulein, the Princess Victoria had, characteristically, gone on strike over the matter of learning her letters :

“ Whatever you may say or do,” she exclaimed, punctuating her angry words with stamps of her tiny feet, “ I will not learn my letters ! I won’t—I won’t—I won’t ! ”

Nor, although she burst into tears later on and said she was sorry, would she go back on her word—until the new

governess very carefully explained to her why she ought to learn them, and then begged her to, for *her* sake.

After which the little girl learned them with great rapidity, and came to enjoy her lessons. The Fräulein, however, was only responsible for the more academic side of the Princess's education. The Baroness de Spath taught her to draw and paint, and to embroider, and to make dainty little cardboard boxes, decorated with tinsel and delicately painted flowers.<sup>1</sup>

The Duchess of Kent herself undertook to guide her little daughter in matters religious. This good lady viewed, with a very natural horror, the dissipations and indiscretions of her late husband's father and brothers and was plainly determined that her daughter should be defended against the taint to the very best of her ability. If she was to be a queen, then she should be in every way a worthy and respectable one! The mother took advantage of a natural bias towards the gravities of religion, and a sense of decorum in conduct—doubtless inherited from herself—and from her very earliest years the little Victoria could be seen each Sunday, sitting as still as a mouse in the family pew and listening with all her small ears to every word of the over-long sermons.<sup>2</sup> This may have been due to a genuine interest, though it would seem more likely that it was actuated by the fact that it was her mother's habit to examine her very closely every Sunday afternoon, upon the sermon of the morning.

But her mother was (with all due respect) a far less enlightened preceptor than the Fräulein, being both narrower minded and more unreasonably tyrannical than the Governess, so that when Victoria was able to drive out alone with Feodora and her governess, she was always less self-conscious and much more animated and natural.

<sup>1</sup> Crawford, 6.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, 21-2.

It would seem that her mother had a repressive effect upon her. This may account for the difference in the opinions of those who met her in her earlier years, referred to above.

There seems to be a similar difference in opinion in regard to her appearance. One biographer does not hesitate to tell us that she was : "extremely fat, and bore a remarkable resemblance to her grandfather," which was certainly no compliment.

On the other hand, Mr. Creevey, who was not given to over-kindliness in such matters, says in one of his letters (describing a night at the Opera) :

" . . . Billy 4th at the Opera was everything one could wish ; a more Wapping air I defy any King to have. . . . I was sorry not to see more of Victoria ; she was in a box with the Duchess of Kent, opposite, and, of course rather under us. When she looked over the box I saw her, and she looked a very nice little girl indeed. . . ."

In those early days little Victoria (or "Drina" as she was still called) showed herself to be warm-hearted, kindly, and responsive to anyone who showed her real and genuine affection. She lavished the utmost and loyalest affection upon the Fräulein Lehzen, Feodora, her dear Victoire (the little daughter of Sir John Conroy, who was her constant playmate), her Mamma, and Madame de Spath. But it would seem that the person she loved best, and the real and unshakable hero of her childhood, was her Uncle, Prince Leopold. She and Feodora were allowed to pay quite frequent visits to Claremont, where life was far freer and less decorous than at Kensington Palace. It is said that both the girls used to weep in each other's arms when such visits came to a conclusion. There seems no doubt but that the happiest

days of that period of Victoria's life were spent at Esher, and she is said to have confided in the Fräulein that she loved her dear Uncle most devotedly, because " he always talks to me most seriously and gently, but as though I were a grown-up person, and his own equal ! "

She paid her first visit to her other Uncle, the King, when she was seven years of age. His Majesty, who had for a number of years been inclined to ignore both his sister-in-law and his niece, having invited them down to Windsor.

It must have been a strange and interesting sight, that meeting ! One sees the old King—looking older than his actual years because of his dissipated life, which had left ineradicable marks on his person, wearing an enormous wig and ornately dressed, with his gouty foot causing him to hobble whenever he essayed to walk ; with his mistress, clad in silks and covered with jewels by his side, and surrounded by his cynical, jeering, disreputable Court all watching that very small girl (who was one day to rule over that same Castle and all the land in his place) as she walked steadily and quite composedly towards him across the vast expanse of polished floor. " The Ogre and the Little Princess to the Life ! " as one onlooker put it.

Victoria, still with absolute composure, dropped her perfect little curtsey, and for a moment the two strangely diverse creatures eyed each other. Then :

" Give me your little paw ! " the King grunted, with his leering smile.

Victoria obeyed instantly, and so those extremes met, and touched.

One can imagine, too, the tremors of the mother who thus saw her so carefully guarded, so painstakingly secluded little innocent brought into contact with the



Baroness Lehzen  
Drawn from nature

BARONESS LEHZen  
From a drawing by Queen Victoria, made before her  
accession



lewd and dissipated children of the Devil (as she no doubt regarded them) who formed the Court of that day—and she, of course, quite helpless to prevent it !

But it must have been worse when, a little later, the King, driving one morning in the Park with the Duchess of Gloucester, encountered the Duchess of Kent with her small daughter and the Princess Feodora.

“ Pop ‘em in ! ” cried the King, and the terrified mother had naught for it but to obey.

Away they drove to Virginia Water, where the astonished Victoria had her first glimpse of the Court at play, with great barges on the water crowded with gay lords and ladies, and musicians playing all the time.

Unfortunately there seems to be no record of the reactions of the little Princess to this gay scene, which must have seemed so different from the ideas of Court life and etiquette as impressed upon her by her mother. The only thing we hear about this visit is given as an example of the remarkable tact possessed by Victoria even at that early age :

“ What is your favourite tune, my dear ? ” the King asked her. “ Tell me, and the band shall play it for you ! ”

To which the small Princess answered, unhesitatingly :

“ God save the King, sir ! ”

Strachey, in recounting this incident, suggests that the future Queen was a very truthful little girl, and that this may have been her genuine opinion. But, even admitting that Queen Victoria’s taste in matters artistic and musical was not that of the *cognoscenti*, this seems a little difficult to believe !<sup>1</sup>

The Duchess of Kent, one may be sure, did everything in her power to prevent incursions such as these into the hectic life of the Court, feeling, no doubt, that even the

<sup>1</sup> *Queen Victoria*, Lyle Strachey, p. 27 ; Lec. 26.

smallest sight and sound of what she seems to have regarded as a hot-bed of vice and dissipation might well corrupt her hitherto so carefully protected and secluded little daughter.

And how vigilant was the watch, and how carefully guarded the seclusion of Victoria during her late infancy and early childhood it is difficult for us to really imagine.

Neither by day nor by night was the vigilance ever relaxed. While playing with her little playmate, Victoire, the Princess was always aware of a trusted funkey, all eyes and ears, respectfully watchful in the background. The same when the two children walked together in Kensington Gardens. Within doors, in school, or play-room, she was never alone—always some nurse, or the Fräulein, the Baroness de Spath, or her mother in person, was present, Cerberus-like.

At night, right through infancy, girlhood, and into young womanhood, she slept in her mother's room, and even at the age of fifteen she was not allowed to walk downstairs without someone to hold her hand as she went !

But it must not be imagined that there was any suggestion of either pomp or circumstance about the early life of the young Princess. Quite the contrary. Many a middle-class family saw more entertainment, had more junketings, and lived on infinitely richer and more varied food than did the future Queen of England. An almost Spartan plainness and discipline in life was the rule laid down for her in the beginning and rigidly adhered to right up to the time of her accession.

One conceives that there must have been a great deal of repression, and the creation of what to-day we call "inhibitions" and "complexes"—a stultifying of the invaluable senses of humour and imagination, which had

their effect, in later years, on the outlook of the Queen of England and Empress of India. And whether that effect was a good one or not must remain, always, a matter of opinion. But at least it can be said that the Duchess of Kent succeeded in what was doubtless her primary object —the crushing out of any of the disreputable tendencies which the little girl might well have inherited from her dissolute forebears on her father's side !

## CHAPTER IX

### THE DOLL WORLD OF PRINCESS VICTORIA

**B**UT, with all her strictness and austerity, the Duchess of Kent was not blind to the fact that a possible future queen must have accomplishments other than a deep sense of religion and the ability to converse gravely and sensibly.

In due course the fiat went forth. The time had come when the young Princess was to put aside childish things, and to acquire the more dignified accomplishments necessary to her future station in life.

With what heart-burnings we shall never know, but can imagine to have been bitter indeed, those solitary children of her fettered fancy, the remarkable collection of dolls which the little Princess had been accumulating for years, were finally put "on the retired list" in the year 1833—only four years before their devoted "mother" became Queen of England.

In their place came the graceful and dignified *ballerina*, "Taglioni," to impart training in dancing, and the dapper and elegant Lablache to cultivate the thin, childish voice in musical cadences. One imagines that Victoria found these a poor substitute for the little world of dolls which had been the only outlet hitherto for her childish imagination.

So significant are these puppets of the dreams and imaginings of this sadly cramped little girl, that some description of them here will not be amiss.

Eventually the collection comprised a total of one hundred and thirty-two dolls, of which we are told the odd thirty-two were dressed by Victoria herself, and it seems likely that these formed the nucleus of the collection which was added to from time to time in later years.

Of these dolls Victoria kept, most meticulously, a sort of directory, or "Dolls' Debrett," in which was recorded the name of each doll, by whom it was dressed, and, usually, the character it represented. This interesting record was kept in an ordinary copy-book, which bore the title, written in a singularly adult hand for one so young : "LIST OF MY DOLLS."

They were, in a sense, rather a cosmopolitan gathering, those dolls, including amongst them such diverse characters as : Queen Elizabeth, the Earl of Leicester, Amy Robsart, Mlle Duvernay, Pauline Lereaux, Mrs. Dudley, M. Musard, Taglioni (twice), Heloise, Duchess of Guido, "Mrs. Martha, Housekeeper," and "A Cradle of Twins" (anonymous).

Their costumes were ingenious, and in most cases designed with a close eye on historical accuracy. The details, too, were very meticulously carried out. There were miniature reticules, and tiny handkerchiefs, embroidered with even tinier initials.

There is the Earl of Leicester, who was dressed and "made up" by the little Princess herself. He is (for he, like the rest of the collection, is still in existence) equipped with a magnificent set of black moustachios and whiskers (painted), and magnificently attired in pink satin hose, slashed with white, a white satin tabbed tunic, with pink slashings, and a white lace ruffle. His breast is decorated with the Order of the Garter, as represented by its blue ribbon, and his attire is completed by a

black velvet hat with a wide brim and magnificent, curling, white plumes.

Amy Robsart—who, we are told, was included in the collection not so much as an historical personage, rather as a character in a ballet, performed by Mlle Brocard, which the Princess had seen and delighted in—wears a long, closely cut riding-habit of green velvet, with a short riding bodice of the same material, trimmed with a narrow gold-braiding down the front, and ending in a point at the waist. Her sleeves are tight, and she wears a "Dorothy Vernon" hat of velvet, with curling feathers of white which fall gracefully over the forehead. It is said that the dress is an exact reproduction of the one worn by Mlle Brocard in the part.

M. Musard would appear to have been another stage character, apparently a clown. His face is very masculine, without assistance, as in the case of the Earl of Leicester, of make-up. He wears bright yellow pantaloons of silk, a short, blue silk jacket with "bishop's" sleeves, and a small lace frill. The origin of M. Musard is lost in obscurity, but no doubt he represents some performer seen somewhere by the little Princess.

In latter days there has been a great revival in this country of public interest in the ballet, and it will doubtless interest modern ballet "fans" to know that Princess Victoria to a large extent shared their enthusiasm. This may have been due to her association with Taglioni, who appears at least twice amongst the collection, in different costumes, as do several other *ballerinas*, as well as a character known as "M. Albert," and believed to be the celebrated ballet-master of the King's Theatre, who is clothed in a single white garment which, though it looks rather like a female's shift (as they called them in those days), is probably intended to represent a Russian tunic!

There are several dolls who, if they do not represent Taglioni herself, are intended to represent parts she played in ballet, notable amongst them being dolls who are named in the "Directory" as *Mme Sylphide Taglioni* and *Miss Rosina Taglioni*. Here is a little mystery, because Taglioni certainly had no sisters or other female relations who bore her name (as was stated by one writer on the subject of dolls), so that it follows that these two dolls either represent characters in which the Princess Victoria had seen Taglioni, or else are just two fictitious characters, the children of her own imagination, purely and simply.

Amongst other stage celebrities of the day represented in this doll world we find *Mlle Proche*, as she appeared in *Un Jour à Naples*, resplendent in a very bright silken skirt of yellow, with bodice and trimmings of prune; *Mlle Augusta*, as she danced in *La Bayadere*; "little *Miss Poole*," a very talented child actress of her day, who is represented by a tiny doll, clad in a single garment of pink gauze, as she appeared when she sang her most popular song, "Meet me by Moonlight alone," from the operetta, *Old and Young*; and an anonymous "stage-soldier," in a smart military uniform with nankeen trousers, scarlet tunic, and gold braid complete.

One could go on for a very long time describing this unique and singularly interesting collection of puppets, but space does not permit. We cannot, however, leave them without reference to the character that was, perhaps, the most charming and delightful of them all.

"*Miss Arnold*" is her description in the "Directory," nothing more. She may have been some young lady the Princess once met or saw somewhere, and who attracted her childish fancy, or she may have been taken from some book or play, or, again, she may have been just a dream person.

But, be that as it may, one has only to glance at her, in her simple white muslin frock, with a delicate sash and neck-ribbon of lilac, to realize that here one has the very personification of ideal English girlhood in the pre-Victorian era, her coal-scuttle bonnet modestly hiding her features from a too-inquisitive world, and her very attitude the epitome of ladylike reserve. One likes to think that this delicate and dainty creature never really existed, except in the childish imagination of her small owner.

Perhaps the most surprising as well as the most pathetic feature about the collection is the fact that none of these dolls are of the elaborate and expensive type one would expect to find in a Royal play-room. The simplest child of to-day would probably regard them with the utmost contempt, for they belong to that almost forgotten fraternity of "Dutch dolls"—plain little wooden figures, jointed at knees, hips, shoulders, and elbows, with queer flat chests and backs, the bodies being made of plain, uncoloured wood, and the little round heads painted with sleek, black hair, rather staring eyes, very scarlet cheeks, and with queer, sharp little noses stuck into the centre.

This type of doll could be purchased in those days from almost any small toyshop at prices ranging from a half-penny to sixpence each, according to size, and the majority of those used by the Princess Victoria for her collection were of the twopenny size, with penny ones for the smaller characters, such as little Miss Poole, and halfpenny ones for the infant population, such as the children of the Countess of Rothsay and the anonymous twins in the cradle.

Here and there was to be found a special doll made of leather, or canvas, with a stuffed body and a china face, but these were very few, and the great majority were those

ordinary Dutch dolls, translated by what amounted to the creative genius of their small owner into a large number of separate and distinctive personalities, many of them with quite subtle shades of difference between them, but the difference there all the same.

It was in this direction that the repressed childish imagination of the little girl found its outlet. One cannot help feeling that when, on the stern command of her never-to-be-disobeyed mother, she took leave of her doll world—the world of her own making, upon which so much creative skill and ingenuity had been lavished—the parting must have been indeed a bitter one. Even the excitement of the introduction of Taglioni and Lablache into her narrow life could hardly have been an adequate recompense for the loss of the dolls.

## CHAPTER X

### THE GIRL-QUEEN

**I**N 1830 George IV died, and the Duke of Clarence became King William IV. It was by now clear to everyone that there was very little likelihood of the new Queen ever becoming a mother again, and the Princess Victoria was therefore recognized by Parliament as the heir-presumptive to the English Throne.

The first proof of this was that Parliament, almost immediately after the late King's death, voted the Duchess of Kent a further ten thousand pounds a year for the maintenance of the Princess; the second was that she was appointed Regent, in case the King should die before the Princess reached her majority.

The next sign of the times was a convulsion that shook the constitution of the State. The Duchess of Kent had followed faithfully in the footsteps of her late husband, and had espoused the cause of the Opposition. She had formed a rallying-point for Whig leaders and Radical agitators; she was on intimate terms with Lord Durham, and even with Daniel O'Connell. She had publicly declared that she pinned her faith to the "liberties of the People."<sup>1</sup> And so, in a sense, the Duchess of Kent and her daughter had been the hopes and the protégées of the Opposition.

But with the death of George, the situation began to change. With the passing of the Reform Bill the middle

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, I, 17. Strachey, 23.

classes began to make themselves felt in the constitution of the country to some purpose. The Whigs came into power ; the Government showed a bias towards a Liberal outlook.

From being quite an obscure member of the Royal Family, with a daughter who was recognized by the longer-sighted as being only *possibly* of some real importance in the future, the Duchess of Kent became a distinct asset of the majority of the nation, and the Princess Victoria, as future Queen, their one great hope. From being an obscure little princess of whom nobody outside her own immediate circle took much notice or thought very much about, she suddenly became the centre of everyone's thoughts, hopes, and attentions. But at that time she was still in complete ignorance, carefully preserved, on her mother's instructions, by all about her, as to her likely destiny and ultimate fate.

But it now became evident that steps would have to be taken to enlighten her. At the time of King George's death she was eleven years of age.

As a preliminary to this end, the Duchess of Kent, anxious to know whether her efforts to bring up her small daughter in the way she should go had been successful, requested the Bishop of London and the Bishop of Lincoln to examine her daughter, and to give their opinion as to her fitness, so far as could be ascertained at the time, eventually to reign.

In her letter to the bishops the Duchess wrote :

" I feel that the time has now come that what has been done should be put to some test, that if anything has been done in error of judgment it may be corrected. . . . The general bent of her character is strength of intellect, capable of receiving with ease information and with a

peculiar readiness in coming to a very just and benignant decision on any point on which her opinion is asked. Her adherence to truth is of so marked a character that I feel no apprehension of that Bulwark being broken down by any circumstances. . . .”

The bishops, of course, consented to her request, and in due course attended at Kensington. They reported that, in their opinion, the Princess’s state of mind, both as regards education and general outlook on life, was in every way eminently satisfactory.

But even then it was not until a year later that the news that she was, in all likelihood, to occupy the place of her Uncle William on the Throne of England was broken to her.

The story of how that was accomplished in the end has been told many times—the staging of the history lesson embodying a study of the genealogical table of the kings and queens of England ; the Princess’s inevitable queries, the replies, and her eventual realization of the fact.

Her final comment on the situation is a matter of history, but is worth repeating as being unique in its directness, simplicity, and brevity. It is doubtful whether any individual in the whole history of the world has ever received the news that he or she was heir to a monarchy in just this way, yet no prospective monarch could have said more—and certainly could not have said less !

When, at last, little Victoria came to realize just what it all meant, she was silent for a few moments and then, standing stiffly erect, and gazing into vacancy, she said, almost mechanically :

“ I will be good ! ”

Many years afterwards Her Majesty wrote, in describing the event, “ I cried much on learning it.” One presumes

that the tears must have come later, probably when in the privacy of her own room.

It has become customary, particularly amongst the younger generation, in these post-War years to criticize with some severity the character of Queen Victoria and her times. Some of that criticism is very harsh, though a great deal of it is more or less justified. I doubt if even her most severe critics, however, can in fairness deny that, whatever her faults, Victoria did her utmost to rule her great Empire wisely and well, nor can it be said that she altogether failed to do so. That she had many faults and made many mistakes, no impartial student can deny. But it is only fair to suggest that these were not, in the strict sense, due to any fault of her own.

Her shortcomings, both as a ruler and as a woman, arose from her almost total lack of two of the most essential qualities in any human being—imagination and a sense of humour. And for this lack I think we must blame, not Victoria herself, but those who had charge of her during her youth, and in particular her mother and Fräulein Lehzen.

The former, again, was actuated by a really sincere desire to mould her daughter's character so that she should be fit to sit on the throne of a great country, and to acquit herself nobly in the sight of both God and man. But from the beginning the good lady was suffering under a complex—that her daughter should be inoculated, as it were, against what she doubtless regarded as the taint of the Georgian blood, with its tendency towards grossness, dissipation, and looseness of living. She succeeded in achieving this, but at a cost! From the beginning she overlooked the fact that a ruler of people can be too austere, too narrow, too bigoted, as well as too indulgent and self-indulgent. And in particular she

failed to realize that no one can rule others entirely successfully without two of the greatest and most necessary gifts of God—a quick imagination and a lively sense of humour.

It was the Princess Victoria's misfortune, and not her fault, that the mental atmosphere which surrounded her during the greater part of her early life, and particularly during those important years of adolescence, was almost entirely feminine. Had the little girl been more with her uncle, Prince Leopold, things might have been different. But when she was eleven years of age, the Prince was called upon to occupy the throne of Belgium, and thereafter their intercourse continued only through the cold and comparatively un-intimate medium of correspondence. That separation was a great deprivation for her, and a greater one, in effect, for the nation over which she was destined to rule.

Thereafter she was surrounded by a “monstrous regiment of women,” all impregnated with the bugbear of the Georgian tradition, in crushing which they also crushed, or at the best stultified, both the imagination and the sense of humour of the girl-who-was-to-be-Queen.

That, in the beginning, she was possessed of both these characteristics, there can be little doubt. Whatever the faults and failings of the Georges and Williams, they were not deficient in sense of humour, and some of this they must have passed on to their small descendant.

That in her early years Victoria possessed imagination is amply proved by her collection of dolls, dealt with in the previous chapter. That she had, in her youth, also a sense of humour is also proved by at least one incident. A certain lady, a friend of Fräulein Lehzen's, called on the latter one day at Kensington Palace, and, in the course of a chat, asked if she might borrow “one or two” books

from the well-supplied shelves in the governess's room, to which the Fräulein responded by inviting her to take what she wanted.

Shortly afterwards the governess was called away in a hurry, and bade farewell to her visitor before departing, telling her to help herself to the books she wanted before she went.

The lady, who had her carriage waiting for her somewhere at the foot of the back staircase, helped herself so liberally that she almost cleared the top shelf of the bookcase, and for ease in transport, she raised the front of her skirt and utilized it as a carrier.

Proceeding thus towards the back stairs, where she did not expect to encounter anyone—or, at any rate, anyone who mattered—she had the misfortune to run right into the Princess Victoria herself !

“ . . . You may imagine the state of my feelings ! ” (she says, in writing to a friend about it). “ Apart from anything else, I had to do my curtsey, and that was quite impossible without scattering the books all over the floor, which would have looked ridiculous ! I just stood there, in the utmost confusion, and not knowing what in the world to do ! For a moment the Princess looked at me with some hauteur, as I thought. Then, lowering her eyes, she saw and realized my predicament, and to my immense relief, burst into laughter. In which I immediately joined, and we parted on the best of terms. . . . ”

How very different would that incident have been if it had taken place some ten years later. . . !

The Princess, during those adolescent years preceding her accession, had her reading as strictly censored and supervised as was the rest of her daily life. It did not occur, apparently, to her preceptors that part of her

training (and a very important part) as a future ruler should be a study of the lives of her people to be, *in all their aspects*. In every way she was most rigidly guarded from all knowledge of the seamy side of life, and no sight, sound, nor even rumour of anything that could, in the eyes of those super-strict guardians, be regarded as "coarse" or "offensive" (such as any event that might happen in the lives of the lower classes—poverty, destitution, starvation, etc) was ever allowed to come anywhere within her reach.

With a similar end in view, one supposes, her reading was most carefully selected for her. The effect of this in narrowing her mind can be gathered from her criticism of a volume of memoirs from the pen of Fanny Kemble which seems to have somehow got into her hands, doubtless by an oversight :

" It is certainly very pertly and oddly written. One would imagine by the style that the authoress must be very pert, and not very well-bred, for there are many vulgar expressions in it. It is a pity that a person endowed with so much talent, as Mrs. Butler really is, should turn it to so little account and publish a book which is so full of trash and nonsense, and which can only do her harm. . . . "

That, despite the almost complete elimination of male society from her life in those days, she did not fail to react to their proximity when it happened, is shown by her remarks anent her two cousins, the Princes Alexander and Ernst of Würtemberg, who paid a visit to Kensington when the Princess was fourteen years of age.

" They are both *extremely tall*. Alexander is *very handsome*, and Ernst has a *very kind expression*. They are both **EXTREMELY amiable!** "

Two years later she met two other cousins, the Princes Ferdinand and Augustus. In connection with these she mentioned that "Augustus is very unaffected," and "shows much good sense," and that "Dear Ferdinand came and sat near me, and talked so dearly and sensibly. I do *so* love him." "They are both very handsome and *very* dear."

Of two other cousins, the Princes Ernest and Albert of Saxe-Coburg, she wrote: "Ernest . . . has dark hair, and fine eyes and eyebrows, but his nose and mouth are not good . . ." and "Albert, who is just as tall as Ernest but stouter, is extremely handsome; his hair is about the same colour as mine; his eyes are large and blue, and he has a very beautiful nose and a very sweet mouth with fine teeth, but the charm of his countenance is his expression, which is most delightful; *c'est à la fois* full of goodness and sweetness, and very clever and intelligent. . . ."

From which it will be gathered that, despite her seclusion, the young Princess had all her wits about her, and was something of a physiognomist to boot!

And, incidentally, such was the first meeting of the Princess Victoria and the man who was afterwards to be her Consort.

In-laws are almost always a nuisance, and are thorns in the side even of Royalty, as the relations between King William IV and the Duchess of Kent, his sister-in-law, tend to prove! There was between them a natural antipathy which would have existed whatever their stations in life, and without the jealousy undoubtedly felt by the childless King for the mother of the girl who was his probable successor.

The Duchess regarded the King as a dangerous roué and a rake; the King regarded the Duchess as a prude and a fool. It is possible that neither of them was entirely

wrong. Nevertheless they had one thing in common—they both meant well !

The Duchess bore the King's neglect of herself and her daughter with equanimity. So far as her daughter's outlook on and attitude towards life was concerned, she felt that the King's hatred was safer than his friendship.

Naturally, there were squalls and squabbles between these two—not always kept as private as was desirable. There was the celebrated incident of the King's birthday party, and the banquet at which, in reply to a toast of his health, the King rose and roundly abused the Duchess with a vulgarity that a costermonger would have hesitated to display. The Queen was scarlet with embarrassment and poor little Victoria burst into tears. The Duchess of Kent said not a word, but ordered her carriage immediately the banquet was over, and was only with difficulty persuaded to remain at Windsor Castle until the following morning.

Then there was the occasion on which the King learned that the Duchess, cruising around the coast on her yacht with the Princess, had given orders (as was her right) that whenever the yacht ran into harbour it should be greeted with Royal salutes from the guns of the men-of-war and forts on the spot.

The King thumped on the table, and cried :

“ That woman is a nuisance ! These continual poppings must cease ! ”

The salutes were the Duchess's right, in the circumstances. She was advised to waive her right, but refused point-blank so to do. The salutes continued—until the King, very pettily, issued a special decree that Royal salutes should only be accorded to vessels which had on board either the reigning sovereign or his consort !

THE DUCHESS OF KENT  
Margravine, DUCHESS OF CAMBRIDGE  
From a painting by H. von Angeli





In 1836 the King tried to arrange a marriage between Victoria and one of the sons of the Prince of Orange, and, in accordance with that plan, endeavoured to prevent the visit to Kensington of the young Princes of Coburg. He failed in both efforts, and greatly annoyed King Leopold of the Belgians by his attitude.

In one other thing the King succeeded. He had announced, over and over again, that he prayed he might live until Victoria's majority, so that the Duchess should never be Regent. Shortly before the Princess's eighteenth birthday a sudden attack nearly defeated him, but he recovered from it and in the end his prayer was granted.

But it was clear that his days were numbered, and it may be that, after the Princess's birthday celebrations, the lack of his previous incentive to live just to avoid the Duchess becoming Regent—hastened his end.

He died on June 20th, 1837.

And so the once comparatively obscure and neglected little Princess came to the throne of the greatest Empire in the world !

The story of the accession of Queen Victoria and of the night visit to Kensington to carry the news of her elevation to her has been told too often to make it worth while recounting here, but extracts from the correspondence of some of the individuals concerned in this chapter of history cast some interesting sidelights on these momentous events, and the reactions of some of those most affected by them.

Coming events cast their shadows . . . The following are extracts from a letter from Leopold, King of the Belgians, to Princess Victoria, and dated from the Tuilleries on June 7th, 1837 :

“. . . The entree (of the Duke and Duchess of Orleans into Paris, after their wedding at Fontainebleau on May

30th), was something splendid ; we saw it from the Tuileries, as we had nothing to do with the business itself, and your Aunt's rank would have clashed with that of the Duchess of Orleans. The effect of all this on the people of this great town has been *very great* and evidently much ground has been solidly regained. The King, getting out of that sort of confinement in which it was necessary to keep, has gained much in personal comfort, and also in a political point of view ; because to have a King who cannot show himself without being shot at, is a state of society which lowers his authority. . . . I mean to wait some more detailed accounts of what is going on in England before I give my opinion on what ought to be done in the case that the King's disease should take a more fatal turn. As I told you before, however, when we treated this subject both verbally and in writing, I believe it to be your interest to act very mildly, *to begin by taking everything as the King leaves it.* By this system you will avoid disappointing those whose hopes may remain unchanged, as your own choices, as it were, are not yet made. Parties, which at present are so nearly balanced, remain in *status quo*, and you gain time. I must now conclude this letter. My winding up is, keep your mind *cool and easy* ; be *not alarmed* at the prospect of becoming perhaps sooner than you expected Queen ; aid will not be wanting. . . . Ever, my dear child, your faithful Uncle and Friend,

“ LEOPOLD R.”

And another one, dated from Laeken, on June 15th :

“ MY BELOVED CHILD,

“ I hope that to-day will not pass over without bringing me a letter from you. In the meantime I will

begin this epistle, which will go by a messenger of my own to-morrow. In every letter I shall write you, I mean to repeat to you, as a *fundamental rule*, to be *courageous, firm and honest*, as you have been till now. You may count upon my faithful good offices in all difficulties, and you have at your command Stockmar, whose *judgment, heart and character* offer all the guarantees we can wish for. . . . My object is that you should be no one's *tool*, and though young, and naturally not experienced, your good natural sense and the *truth* of your character will, with faithful and proper advice, get you very well through the difficulties of your future position, should it be the will of Providence to take the King from this earthly life. . . ."

It will be seen that the little Princess was not kept short of advice during that anxious period of waiting for what Fate had in store for her. One is inclined to wonder how she felt, this young girl who had spent so much of her life in such seclusion, during those last anxious days. The King's end was by no means certain—he had been very, very close to death on former occasions, and at the last moment had managed to draw back in a way little short of miraculous. One pictures her sitting very quietly, with wide eyes that seem to be striving to pierce the veil of the Future, and with heaven knows what reflections chasing each other across the almost virgin territory of her thoughtful mind. One conceives that now she must have reached the climax of that subtle form of mental torture to which she had been subjected all the years of her young life—that of never being left alone. One feels how much she would have liked to have crept away to some dim and obscure corner, and there awaited, in thoughtful solitude, whatever

might be coming to her. But one only *feels* this, for there is little concrete evidence to show the state of her mind at the time.

There is a letter from her to the King of the Belgians, dated June 16th, four days before the King's death :

" MY BELOVED UNCLE,

" . . . I cannot say how happy I am that the *entrée publique* into Paris succeeded so well, and that the dear King was so well received ; I trust he will now at last be rewarded for all the trouble and anxiety he has had ever since 1830. Lord Palmerston said that the French say that *l'assassinat est hors de mode*. I hope and trust in Heaven that this may be the case, and for *ever* ! You know, of course, dear Uncle, how *very ill* the King is ; it may *all be over at any moment*, and yet *may last a few days*. Consequently we have not been out anywhere in public since Tuesday, 6th, and since Wednesday all my lessons are stopped, as the news may arrive very suddenly . . . . "

Waiting . . . waiting . . . !

There is a letter from the Belgian King, dated June 17th, in which he proceeds to advise his niece as to " what is to be done when the King ceases to live." He advises her to entrust Lord Melbourne with the office of retaining the existing Administration, and goes on to say : " . . . For them, as well as for the Liberals at large, you are the only Sovereign that offers them *des chances d'existence et de durée*. With the exception of the Duke of Sussex, there is no one in the family that offers them anything like what they can reasonably hope from you, and your immediate successor, with the moustaches, is enough to frighten them into the most violent attachment to you . . . . "

This last refers to the Duke of Cumberland, the "bad man of the piece" and the bugbear of all England at that time, whose ogreish reputation undoubtedly made the accession of Victoria far more popular with the nation than it would have been had he not existed.

In this letter it is shown that Leopold was aware that the life led by the Little Princess up to that time had left a great deal to be desired, for he says :

" . . . the irksome position in which you have lived will have the merit to have given you the habit of *discretion* and *prudence*, as in your position you cannot have too much of either. . . . "

Victoria's next letter to Leopold is rather more revealing. One feels that days of anxiety and repression had made it necessary for her to unburden her heart at least to some extent, and who could be a better confidant than her beloved and all-trusted uncle? This letter is dated June 19th—the day before the end of King William, and the beginning of Queen Victoria, came :

" MY DEARLY BELOVED UNCLE,

" Your *kind* and *dear* letter, containing *most wholesome, prudent, sound and excellent* advice, was given me by our *good* and *invaluable honest* friend, Stockmar, and I beg you to accept my best thanks for it. . . . The King's state, I may fairly say, is *hopeless*; he may *perhaps* linger a few days, but he cannot recover *ultimately*. . . . Poor old man! I feel very sorry for him; he was always personally kind to me, and I should be ungrateful and devoid of feeling if I did not remember this. I look forward to the event which it seems is likely to occur soon, with calmness and quietness; I am not alarmed at it, and yet I do not suppose myself quite equal to all;

I trust, however, that with *good will, honesty, and courage* I shall not, at all events, *fail*. Your advice is most excellent, and you may depend upon it I shall make use of it, and follow it. . . . I need not add much more, dearest Uncle, but that I trust that the all-powerful Being who has so long watched over my destinies will guide and support me in whatever situation and station it may please Him to place me! . . ."

Her next letter to her uncle was, presumably, the first letter she ever wrote as Queen of England, and the first one she ever signed with the Royal signature. It is dated: "*20th June, 1837 (half-past eight, a.m.)*" and is very brief:

" DEAREST, MOST BELOVED UNCLE :

" Two words only—to tell you that my poor Uncle, the King, expired this morning at twelve minutes past two. The melancholy news was brought me by Lord Conyngham and the Archbishop of Canterbury at six. I expect Lord Melbourne almost immediately, and hold a Council at eleven. Ever, my beloved Uncle, your devoted and attached Niece,

" VICTORIA R."

It is interesting to note that, at such a time of excitement, rush, and confusion, she should have snatched (as she must have done) time to write this note.

And so, in all courage and humility, the Little Princess came into her great Heritage.

## CHAPTER XI

### PRINCE GEORGE IN ADOLESCENCE

PRINCE GEORGE, in the meantime, had been growing up, assimilating eagerly views and impressions of persons and events, and, as was his habit, from time to time introspectively investigated his own growing character—seldom, it would seem, with any great satisfaction to himself.

In the early weeks of 1836 he paid a number of visits to the country, including one to Lord Brownlow, and another, in company with his tutor and Prince Ernest of Coburg, to Lord Howe. Of the former visit he says that “Belton is a nice place and an excellent house, full of most agreeable society,” and of the latter that there were fewer people, but they were “very merry.”

He also mentions in his Diary that “the hunting was unfortunately prevented by frost—and I had only two days of it, when my horses, four of which had gone down, went very tolerably well.”

He appears at this time to have been somewhat encouraged that his shooting showed improvement—“... I killed much better than last year. One day I shot more than twelve hares, but I missed the pheasants terribly....”

Soon after his return from these visits he received news of the serious illness of his mother, the Duchess of Cambridge, who was, with the Duke, in Hanover, and seems to have gone through a period of great anxiety until, about the end of January, he learned that “... the

ever having left my mother, I think I need not be alarmed. . . .”

In February of the same year he mentions that he cannot get on with Greek and Latin as well as he ought to, and expresses some fear that he may grow up a dunce, “which is certainly not very agreeable.”

He now had to face the prospect of a return to Hanover, which idea did not seem to arouse very much enthusiasm in his boyish mind. He had evidently become very attached to England, and to English people and manners. His change of views in this regard is indicated by his comments on his approaching return to Hanover.

In November, 1835, he wrote :

“. . . In seven months from this time I hope to be once more united with my German friends. But at the same time I hope to return to England every year. . . .”

And in April, 1836 :

“. . . Alas ! The time of my going to Hanover is now rapidly approaching, when I shall have to leave a beloved preceptor, who has been with me for eight years, and who has ever been my friend in all circumstances. *The only thing I am glad about*<sup>1</sup> is seeing my parents and sisters, which is, of course, always a source of great pleasure to me, for they are all goodness to me, and I should be very ungrateful if I were not to return theirs with mutual affection. . . .”

And again, under the date of May 1st :

“. . . and I fear I shall only remain one month longer in England. May God grant that my stay in Hanover may not be very long, but that during the time there it may be of use to me. . . .”

<sup>1</sup> The italics are inserted.

And, finally, on June 1st :

" . . . I suppose that during the present month I shall go to Hanover. How sorry I shall be to leave all my dear friends here. I hope, however, that I shall soon come back to see them again. God knows how attached I am to this country and to its inhabitants. . . . "

In the spring of 1836 Queen Adelaide had consulted the Duke of Wellington in regard to the future education of her nephew, Prince George, and the Iron Duke advised very strongly a military training. In a letter dated April 20th of that year he says :

" . . . It is absolutely necessary for Prince George to be a Master, not only of the theory and scientific branches of the Art, but likewise the detail and practice of Military Discipline as well in the Services of Germany as of England. . . . But the first thing of all is to form his mind, his principles and his judgment, and to give him a knowledge of Men, their actions, their affairs, and of their influence upon the events of the world. . . . "

As a result of this Colonel Cornwall, of the Coldstream Guards, who had accompanied the Duke of Cambridge to Hanover that year, was appointed Military Governor to the young Prince. But his military career will be dealt with later.

It seems that the young Prince had a habit, doubtless arising from shyness or modesty, of rather avoiding strangers, so that at social gatherings he was apt to confine his conversation almost entirely to old friends, instead of striving to make new ones.

On one such an occasion he seems to have " cold-shouldered " Sir John Fellowes in these circumstances, a fact of which Sir John complained to Mr. Harvey, with

the result that Prince George got a sound wigging for "when in society, thinking of himself before others."

Under the date of July 11th, the last entry made in his Diary, before going to Hanover, H.R.H. comments on the personality of his new military tutor, in regard to which he says :

"Colonel Cornwall came down here on Tuesday, and stayed over yesterday. To judge from appearances he is a very nice person, and suits me very well. He is younger than Sir William Gomm, is of excellent family, and acquainted with most people that live in the best society in London. I think he will also please at Hanover, which is a great point."

On July 21st H.R.H. left England and, according to his own statement, had a very good passage to Antwerp, and was received, "in a most kind and hearty manner by everybody in Germany."

He seems to have settled down in Hanover very rapidly and comfortably. His life there was a quiet and orderly one. Up at seven-thirty each morning, and occupied until one o'clock with his studies. In the afternoon a ride in the school, and thereafter another lesson. Dinner at four-thirty, and in the evening a play or concert. Three times weekly a music lesson in the evening. He mentions, naïvely : ". . . on Wednesdays and Saturdays I have more time to myself."

Nevertheless, his many friends in England were not forgotten. Under February 1st in his Diary he mentions :

". . . Various events have occurred since I last wrote . . . but there is one that gave me very great pain, although in some respects it is a blessing, and that is the death of poor dear Page, who died at Kew the 19th of last month of the influenza very calmly and without pain. In her we have lost a most valuable friend. . . "

The Page referred to was a very old and devoted servant of the Duchess of Cambridge, in whose family she had been a nurse.

Prince George went on a visit to Berlin with his father, and there met many notable people—amongst them Prince William, afterwards the first German Emperor, and father of the Kaiser. Of him H.R.H. says : “ . . . Prince William, a very kind and sensible man, and his wife, very handsome and agreeable. I must own she is the person who pleased me most. . . . ” Prince William’s wife was formerly Princess Augusta of Saxe-Weimar.

It would seem that the advice of the Duke of Wellington had been anticipated by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, for the military career of the young Prince had commenced at a very early age. At nine years old he had been given the patent of Colonel *en second* of the famous Guard Jäger Regiment of the Hanoverian Army.

Upon his return to Hanover H.R.H. almost immediately took up active duty with this regiment, serving first as a private, and afterwards as an officer. He seems, from the very beginning, to have taken a great interest in his Army work, and mentions his first guard with considerable enthusiasm :

“ . . . On May 9th this year I mounted my first guard at the Palace of Hanover. Lieutenant Baring was on guard with me. I must confess that it was one of the happiest days of my life, for I, for the first time, felt as if I was really a soldier.”

Another symptom of his pride in his soldiering was that, with a natural boyish desire to “ show-off,” he used at this time to drill his men in the avenue leading to the Herrenhausen, near Monbrillant, which was the summer residence of the Duke and Duchess, and where his mother and sisters could observe his prowess.

The Prince had, as we have noted, before leaving England recorded his great desire that he should soon return there, but he could hardly have had any conception of the circumstances under which he would eventually come back.

Mr. Wood, lately tutor to H.R.H., was now Chaplain to Queen Adelaide, but kept up a correspondence with his late charge, and during the latter part of May and early June his letters to H.R.H. were increasingly shadowed by the anticipation of King William's death. Finally the Prince received a letter which told of the end :

" WINDSOR CASTLE,  
" *June 20th.*

" MY DEAREST PRINCE,

" God's will be done ! Our dear lamented King expired this morning at twelve minutes after two—calm, resigned, happy, and without struggle. . . . The poor Queen remained some time on her knees in prayer by the bedside. She then went to her room and slept for some hours. . . . She got up, however, soon after eight to receive Lord Conyngham, who with the Archbishop had been to announce the sad event to the Princess Victoria. You will, with ourselves, be rejoiced to hear that Lord Conyngham was much pleased with the propriety of the Princess's manner, which was marked by *deep* feeling, dignity, and self-possession. The news had not been expected (though Prince Hohenlohe had gone out yesterday with the account of the poor King's hopeless state) at Kensington. After some time the Queen Victoria came down—before six o'clock—in a dressing-gown and slippers and received the Archbishop and Lord Conyngham *alone*. . . . Lord Conyngham returned here with a very kind and feeling message to our poor Queen, placing everything in the Castle at her disposal and making many affectionate inquiries after her. . . ."

Two interesting points about this part of the very long letter are first, that the reverend gentleman seems to have been in some doubt as to the precise moment when Victoria's new title should properly be used, but appears to have finally settled it to his own satisfaction. According to him she remained a Princess until the moment of descending the stairs in her dressing-gown and slippers, and then to have become a Queen !

The second point is that, for some reason, he stresses the fact that Victoria saw the messengers *alone*, and italicizes the word precisely as Victoria herself does in her Journal.

After describing in considerable detail the death scene at Windsor, which seems to have affected him greatly, Mr. Wood goes on to more personal matters :

“ . . . Of the immediate effect of this great loss of one who was with so much sincerity a father and benefactor and friend to you, my dear Prince, for so many years, as regards your plans and those of the Duke, it would be almost presumption for me to speculate. But I should be much to blame if I did not inform you of the opinion which Sir Herbert Taylor has just expressed, that you ought to lose no time in hastening to this country to be present when the last sad rites are performed to our departed King. . . . though he was less certain about the Duke, Sir Herbert<sup>1</sup> felt no doubt as to your determination . . . believe me, my dear Prince, through every changing scene of life,

“ Your devoted friend,

“ JOHN RYLE WOOD.”

The news of the King's death having been received from the hands of an official messenger, it was immediately decided that Prince George should go to England

<sup>1</sup> Private Secretary to both George and William IV.

for the funeral, and on the 28th he set off, accompanied by his Military Tutor, Colonel Cornwall. They travelled day and night, via Rotterdam, and crossed the Channel on the same boat as the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, brother of Queen Adelaide, who was also on his way to the funeral.

The following entry in the Prince's Diary indicated the effect of King William's death on himself and his family :

" July 12th. The death of the poor King, besides the sorrow we all feel for his personal loss, is in another way a most severe blow to us all, particularly to my own family, for by his death and the accession of Queen Victoria, the kingdom of Hanover is separated from the Crown of Great Britain,<sup>1</sup> and my father is therefore removed from the Government of that country, where he has lived for these twenty-four years, and where we have all been born. . . . Alas! our connection with it is now suddenly broken off, for though we are still, and by God's blessing ever shall remain Princes of Hanover, yet we shall live for the most part in this country. My uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, has now become King of that country, and my cousin, Princess Victoria, is Queen of England. I am thus nearly allied in blood to two great and happy families that are governing two happy and prosperous nations."

It will be seen from the above, and from the foregoing entries in his Diary written just before leaving England for Hanover, that the young Prince's heart was torn between the two countries and the two nations, but, as clearly evidenced in his later life, with the separation caused by the death of King William his whole allegiance turned to England, and all his hopes and ambitions became bound up in her.

<sup>1</sup> The reason being that the Salic law confines succession to the male line.

But before this final settling of his affections and loyalty, he was to pay one more visit to the land of his birth, and at the end of July, after the funeral obsequies of the late King were over, he and Colonel Cornwall left for the Continent, without any settled plans.

But when they arrived at Rotterdam Prince George received a letter from his mother, saying that she proposed to make a short tour to Dusseldorf, Bonn, Wiesbaden, and then on to Rumpenheim.

The Prince immediately decided to accompany her, and records that he and his mother "were charmed to meet again, although our separation had only lasted three weeks. . . ."

At Cleves Prince George was interested in witnessing the shooting practice, in which practically all the male inhabitants took part, and which was, he says : ". . . an amusement common at this year throughout the whole of Germany. . . ." An amusement with a purpose, one imagines, in view of what happened later, in the 'seventies !

At Dusseldorf he wrote of the Hussars he saw at drill as being ". . . not equal to the Hanoverians, though I was very pleased with their appearance and their manner of moving. . . . It is really wonderful to think that men can ride so well who only serve for three years . . . !" From which it will be gathered that H.R.H. had not yet recovered from his inferiority-complex in regard to riding.

At Bonn, of course, the Royal party visited the University, where Prince George met the famous German poet, translator, and critic, Professor August Wilhelm von Schlagel. This was, probably, the first time H.R.H. had met a really great scholar and artist, and the encounter seems to have both amused and puzzled him a good deal. Writing of Schlagel, he says :

" . . . Schlagel, who has once been so famous, and is still very clever (!), is really very eccentric, if not a little mad. We were very much amused at his appearance, manners, and conversation. . . ."

After this short tour had concluded with a large family gathering at Rumpenheim, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, with all their family, finally departed to take up their permanent residence in England, where they settled, first at Cambridge House, in Piccadilly, and later at Cambridge Cottage, Kew.

H.R.H. has a final comment to make on the change, in which he remarks :

" 1837 has been for us a most eventful year, and on the whole I must say very unpropitious, though it is wicked to complain. My poor grandfather<sup>1</sup> is dead, the dear King is no more, besides a variety of friends. Our position in the world is entirely changed. My father has been obliged to quit Hanover, and is now settled in England like the rest of the Royal Family. . . ."

It would seem that H.R.H. about this period was feeling rather sad and melancholy, the result, no doubt, of the various deaths in the family and the permanent separation from his Hanoverian friends.

He was also not too pleased with himself, as is indicated in his Diary under the date of February 26th, 1838, wherein he says :

" To-day is my birthday, and I am now entering upon my twentieth year. . . . I am now arrived at that period of life when a man becomes more or less his own master. Young and inexperienced, one is likely to fall into faults and errors, which would be better avoided. May God forgive me if I do so, and may He assist me to avoid them

<sup>1</sup> The Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, d. May 20th, 1837.



HRH PRINCE GEORGE OF CAMBRIDGE  
From a portrait at Windsor Castle



as much as possible. God grant that my career may be good and happy, and that I may be of use to my fellow creatures. Make me a good son, a kind brother, and a sincere friend. . . .”

There are some rather quaint entries in the Diary about this period, as, for instance, when commenting on the birth of a child to Princess Mary of Anhalt (formerly Princess Mary of Hesse, niece to the Duchess of Cambridge) in regard to which he remarks in the Diary, under the date of January 9th, 1836 :

“ . . . a letter from Dessau telling us that my cousin Mary had been confined on the 29th of a daughter. Both the Mama and baby are doing well, thank God, and I believe the only regret felt is that it is not a son. However, it is too late to think of that now, and I hope that perhaps at some other period a little gentleman may be forthcoming. . . .”

And again, when referring to the first birthday of Victoria as Queen :

“ 17th May. . . . To-day was appointed for the young Queen’s birthday, and accordingly in the morning there was first a parade of the flank Companies of the Foot-Guards, which looked most beautiful, particularly those of the third or Scots Fusiliers. Then afterwards I went to the Drawing Room, a very large one, 2,200 people being there, among whom, however, there was a considerable collection of ugly ones. . . .”

And on the 28th of the same month he writes :

“ . . . I am now quite a gay young man, and leading a regular London life, in a quiet sort of way, nevertheless. Really pleasure sometimes becomes quite a business, and in that respect is not very agreeable . . . !”

## CHAPTER XII

### VICTORIA AND GEORGE—EARLY ASSOCIATIONS

**I**N the early 1830's the Royal cousins, George and Victoria, formed the basis of a deep friendship and mutual attachment which was to resist the onslaught of the years which marked a golden period in English history. In the ball-rooms of their adolescence was fostered an affection tempered by respect which weathered even the most violent storms of their warring personalities.

As frequently happens in like cases, Prince George was adversely impressed by his cousin on the occasion of their first recorded meeting at Kensington Palace when he was but eleven.

"She appears to be a fat, ugly, wilful, and stupid child," said H.R.H. to his tutor, Mr. Wood, afterwards.

This was said in such a tone of superiority that Mr. Wood pointed out to him the fact that he was only a month or two the Princess's senior.

"Ah!" retorted the Prince, quickly. "But at least even a month or so makes a vast difference."

As the years passed with decade-like tread for the Royal children, the two came more and more into contact with one another.

Friday, May 24th, 1833, was Victoria's birthday. She notes in her Diary that she received amongst other gifts ". . . From George Cambridge, a brooch in the shape of a lily of the valley."

In the evening a ball was given in honour of her birthday. As soon was to become her established custom, she danced first with George.

Victoria's love of dancing was proverbial, and she invariably selected George (who, poor boy, did not regard it as the most congenial of exercises) to open the ball with her.

Under the date of May 29th, 1834, he records :

“ . . . Yesterday King's birthday. A very full drawing-room. 1,400 people. . . . Dined at St. James's. A large party, among others the Duchess of Kent and *Princess Victoria, who has a nice countenance and is greatly improved. . . .*”

Apparently Prince George no longer regarded the little Princess as a “ fat, ugly, wilful, and stupid child.”

It is probable that under the vice-like chaperoning of her mother, the Duchess of Kent, and the ubiquitous Lehzen, the question of a flirtation between the Prince and Princess of the Blood Royal never arose. But in spite of Victoria's puritannical and unnatural upbringing, her instincts must have been sufficiently normal to have provoked in her mind thoughts of the possibility of George becoming her Prince Charming.

Whether or not George felt the same towards Victoria is questionable. His outlook was wider and he had seen more of the world. Be that as it may, Prince George and Princess Victoria were often seen together. And since he seldom had rivals on these occasions, it is reasonable to suppose that her suppressed emotions sought abstract expression in a girlish admiration of her handsome cousin.

Scanning the pages of Princess Victoria's Diary, we find George's name mentioned again and again. On

June 9th, 1834, the cousins figured in the Royal visit to Eton College for the Eton Montem. On June 12th, 1834, George Cambridge accompanied the Royal party to Ascot Races. June 30th, 1835, was the day of Victoria's confirmation, to which Prince George referred thus in his Diary :

“ . . . Last night the King and Queen and most of the inmates of the Castle (Windsor) went to town to be present at the confirmation of my cousin, the Princess Victoria, which is to take place at the Chapel Royal to-day. With what awful thoughts must this poor Princess go up to the altar of her God, considering the great responsibility which will probably at some future period be attached to her. . . . ”

It will be seen that at this time he was aware that in all probability Victoria would one day sit on the throne of England.

This was first made clear to him soon after the death of George IV. When informed that his cousin, the Princess Victoria, was heir to the throne, his reactions were not enthusiastic. He shrugged his shoulders and exclaimed :

“ Good heavens ! A woman on the throne of so great a country—how ridiculous. . . . ”

It should be remembered that Prince George regarded himself as a Hanoverian and under the Salic Law no woman could reign in Hanover, except as Consort to the King.

Further references in the Princess's Diary indicate that on whatever official visit Victoria paid, George (when he was in England) was almost certain to be there also. But these meetings were incidental compared to the one so briefly referred to by Prince George in his Diary under the

date of July 10th, 1837. He had come over from Hanover for the funeral of William IV and also to be received by his cousin for the first time since her accession. He records the latter event impersonally, thus :

" . . . After landing, the Duke (of Saxe-Meiningen, who crossed the Channel on the same boat as Prince George) and myself started off for Windsor, where we found the Queen Dowager looking much better than we anticipated. . . . On Wednesday, at half-past two, I went by appointment to Queen Victoria, who received me most graciously. . . . "

That meeting must have been a strange one and certainly one fraught with great embarrassment for both the children—for, after all, what else were they but children with a bare thirty-six years to carry between them ?

Hitherto their meetings had been on the basis of cousins and equals, with, if anything, a slight bias of superiority on the side of George, as being a less obscure segment of the Royal Family than the little Princess of Kensington Palace.

Then it had been cousin meeting cousin—but now it was a case of a subject meeting his Queen. . . .

And a good deal more to it than that if the truth were known !

The moment a spinster ascends the throne of any great country the first thought that leaps to the minds of all concerned is—who will she marry . . . ? Or, perhaps, it would be more correct to shape the thought, who can she marry . . . ?

The greatest need for a girl of eighteen, suddenly elevated to the throne of a great Empire, is undoubtedly the right Consort. Victoria must herself have been aware

of that, and there is no suggestion that she ever contemplated following the example of Queen Elizabeth by becoming England's second Virgin Queen.

In the eyes of her ministers and relatives Prince George of Cambridge was bound to appear at the top of the list of Queen Victoria's marital possibilities. Politically and diplomatically there was much to be said for such a union, and in addition the two young people seemed so admirably suited to each other—he, handsome, thoughtful, earnest, well-built, and healthy; she, personable, dignified.

Victoria, for all her strict upbringing, was still (as she abundantly proved later) a very human young woman, and what young woman of the age of eighteen has not, at some time or other, dreamed of her Romeo?

It seems likely that very definite hints had been dropped to Prince George prior to this interview on the subject of the future possible relations between himself and the new Queen. Both the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge had, no doubt, for a short time entertained the hope that their son might some day occupy the throne of England. And although the birth of the Princess Victoria had put that hope aside permanently, that he should share the throne with her as her Consort was not, after all, such a bad substitute. Thus one feels it likely that either his mother or father, or both, would have given him instructions as to his conduct towards the young Queen, and the reasons therefor.

So we have these two young people meeting, on that sunny afternoon in July, in circumstances which were exciting and at the same time embarrassing. They met no longer as equals, but as Sovereign and subject in the first place, and as possible husband and wife in the second.

And even then, in this latter case, the position was not a normal one. In the ordinary way the choice would have laid with the young man. He would have watched the young lady with attention ; have delved into her mind ; have analysed her manner, her speech, her feelings—and in the end, if he had approved, he might have prosecuted his suit.

But even a Prince and a cousin cannot pay court or propose to his Sovereign Lady. The choice must lie with her. For her to analyse and to judge, and eventually, if she felt so inclined, to announce her choice—as, indeed, she did later on with another cousin, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha.

One feels that if, as he doubtless was, Prince George was aware of this, he must have felt it a humiliation to his new-found manhood, and for that reason must have been all the more embarrassed.

These were the conditions under which these two young people met on that momentous occasion—for in view of the Queen's attitude later towards the Duke of Cambridge (as Prince George had then become) it certainly was momentous, though not in the sense in which those concerned regarded it at the time.

The young Queen received her cousin in one of the larger rooms at the Palace, and we have it from his own written word that she " received him most graciously." They were not, of course, alone—although Victoria had firmly put her foot down and refused to be chaperoned on occasions of official business with her ministers, this hardly came under that category.

That the young Queen had a will of her own we know. That it demonstrated its existence in many ways immediately on her accession we also know. In fact it may be said to have done so *before* her accession, or at any rate

before she had been officially informed of it, for did she not, on that occasion, see the Archbishop and Lord Conyngham alone, and in her *déshabillé*, against her mother's vigorously expressed wish? It is true that the two messengers *asked* to see her alone, but she backed them with her own will—the thin end of the wedge.

On the occasion of Prince George's visit the Duchess of Kent also wished to be present, but Victoria put her foot down firmly. Her mother protested that it would seem discourteous on her part not to see the visitor, if only for a few moments.

"Very well," promptly replied the Queen. "Then you will see him when he first arrives. But you will leave the room before I enter it!"

And from this she would not budge.

Nevertheless the proprieties had to be observed. Doubtless Victoria, who always had a keen sense in such matters, realized that if she saw George quite alone it would give rise to a burst of comment and excited gossip on the probabilities of her marriage with him. So the Baroness Lehzen was deputed to the somewhat thankless duty of acting as *duenna*.

Prior to the meeting the Queen took the Baroness to the room in which she had to meet Prince George and a rehearsal took place:

"You will sit there," announced the young Queen, indicating a rather obscure, but not too distant corner. "And you will bring your embroidery, or something else to occupy you. You will also, if you please, take some care over your *toilette* . . . ! I shall sit here—Cousin George *there*!" Indicating a chair quite close—but not *too* close—to her own.

She herself took great care over her dressing—it is on record that she tried on three frocks before finally

choosing the one she would wear. But the result seems to have been satisfactory, for one of the servants who observed her just before the interview says :

" Her Majesty looked girlish and most charming, and one most sincerely hopes that His Royal Highness was duly impressed—as, indeed, he could hardly help being. . . ."

At half-past two the Prince arrived, and his arrival was observed by this same servant, who says of him :

" His Royal Highness looked very handsome. His pale, thoughtful face, and his air of subdued dignity, befitting the occasion, with the death of the late King so fresh in the minds of all, seeming to enhance the *romantic atmosphere surrounding him.*"<sup>1</sup> She goes on to add : " . . . He went straight to the room, and seemed a trifle nervous in his manner, *as well he might . . . !*"<sup>1</sup>

From this, and various other indications, it seems quite clear that in the minds of the Household, at any rate, there was little doubt as to the real and underlying importance of this meeting.

One conceives that the meeting itself was full of embarrassment for both the young people, not rendered any less so by the fact that in spite of her embroidery, the eagle eye of Lehzen was on them all the time—noting, analyzing, appraising. Later she would have to report every minutest detail into the eager ear of the Duchess of Kent, who, it is rumoured, was at this time very much in favour of a marriage between the two, though later, maybe under the influence of the Baron Stockmar, she transferred her favour to her other nephew, Prince Albert.

Unfortunately no record seems to exist of the Baroness's

<sup>1</sup> The italics are inserted.

impressions of the meeting, except that she noted that : “ when he kissed her hand the Prince’s own seemed very tremulous. It was plain that, beneath his self-restraint, he was considerably agitated. . . .”

The conversation, one conceives, would have been very strained and stilted—formal to a degree :

“ It is indeed nice to see you like this, Cousin George. I hope that you are quite well ? ”

“ Perfectly, Ma’am, I thank you. I trust that your own health has not suffered by the trying times you have been through in the past few weeks ? ”

“ No, I am quite well, thank you—George ! ”

“ I am indeed glad to hear you say so ! Nevertheless, it must have been a great ordeal ! ”

“ Yes, I suppose so ! ” With a faint sigh. “ But there has been so much to do—so many things to see to—that one has little time to think. That is, perhaps, as well ! ”

“ Yes, indeed, I suppose so ! ”

There is an uncomfortable silence. Under her eyebrows, her head bent over her work, Lehzen shoots a keen glance at both of them.

“ It was thoughtful of you to come to England so soon, George ! ”

“ It was no more than my duty, Ma’am ! ”

“ O—oh . . . ! Yes . . . I suppose so ! ” (Has she a faint feeling that she has been slightly snubbed ? ) Then, with a sudden air of vivacity : “ And did you have a nice journey over, George ? ”

“ Well, I would hardly say that. I mean—well, the circumstances alone could hardly make such a journey *enjoyable* ! But it might have been a great deal worse—there was no undue discomfort. As you doubtless know, Colonel Cornwall accompanied me . . . ” (he is now talking rapidly, and in a rather high, nervous tone,

having at last found a subject upon which he can expatiate to some extent) ". . . and we started on the twenty-eighth. We travelled all that day and right through the night, and finally arrived in Rotterdam on Friday. There we rested for a while, and went aboard the steamboat about nine o'clock on Saturday morning. The passage lasted only twenty-four hours, and was quite a good one. The sea was beautifully smooth. Queen Adelaide's brother was on the same boat, which made it more pleasant, and when we landed we both journeyed down to Windsor together . . . !"

"It must be very interesting to travel about like that!" With a little sigh: "I have never had very many opportunities to travel, you know!" Then, rather quickly, as though desirous of changing the subject: "And how did you find poor Queen Adelaide? How do you think she is looking?"

"Oh, very much better than I expected. The Duke (*of Saxe-Meiningen, Queen Adelaide's brother*) thought so, too. She is bearing up most admirably!"

"Yes, she has been very brave, poor lady!"

"Yes, indeed! But I think" . . . (with a sudden look at her, and a hint of boldness in his manner) . . . "she is not the only one who has been brave, in this trying time!"

"Oh, yes—do you . . . ?" A faint blush, and then another hasty change of the subject: "And what do you do with yourself in these days, George? Do you still ride a lot?"

She may have detected from his face and his manner that she had hit upon an unfortunate subject. Anyway she rather deftly changes the subject yet again:

"And your career, George? What do you propose to do with yourself? Are you still destined for the Army . . . ?"

Leading questions, these ! Are you going to devote your life to soldiering, or are you going to share my throne with me . . . ? Shall I like my future Consort to be a soldier . . . ?

" Oh, yes, indeed ! I have quite recently been serving with my Regiment—the Guard Jager Regiment of the Hanoverian Army."

" Oh, yes ! And do you like the military life ? "

" Indeed, yes ! I can think of none better . . . ! "

Not even a second seat on a Throne, my dear ! Was that what he meant ? He goes on, rather hastily :

" I have held the rank of Colonel *en second* in the Regiment, ever since I was a little boy."

" Indeed ? But of course that will have to be a purely honorary title now, since poor Uncle's death has so changed matters. You have as yet no rank in our Army ? "

" Oh, no—not as yet ! "

" We must see to that ! And, after all, the British Army is the finest in the world ! "

" Yes . . . I suppose so . . . ! "

He hardly agrees with that, but one cannot contradict Queens, even if they are cousins as well . . . ! Time to change the subject again :

" And how did you leave your dear Father and Mother, George ? "

" Oh, they were, of course, greatly upset at that time by the sad news. But in health they are very well, I thank you . . . ! "

And so the stilted, formal conversation goes stiffly on, while all the time their thoughts are so very different from their words :

. . . Can I choose this young man for my future husband and Consort . . . ? He is handsome, and seems

good and charming, but there is an obstinate, wilful look about him . . . ! I think perhaps he might not prove to be very *amenable* . . . ! Well, we must see—after all, there is plenty of time . . . !

. . . What shall I do if she does choose me for her Consort . . . ? She is not bad looking, and seems very pleasant and gentle. . . . I think she might even be quite bright and gay, if opportunity arose and someone was there to show her the way. . . . But there is a look of wilfulness about her mouth; a certain hardness in her eyes! I feel sure she would be self-willed and arrogant, if occasion arose. . . . I think perhaps there are very sharp claws under the velvet pads. . . . And, anyway, I do not fancy being *chosen* . . . that is the man's place, after all. . . . And I do not quite like the way she looks at me sometimes, or some of the questions she asks . . . ! It is rather as though she was thinking of buying a poodle dog, and making it show itself off, while she and that old woman in the corner examine its points. . . . I do not think I like being a poodle dog. . . . And if I sat on a throne at all I should like it to be my own, not a woman's that I was just sharing. . . . Besides, marriage is a very sacred thing, and I think one should marry only for mutual love, and not for thrones, or politics, or any sort of reason *except* love. . . . But . . . could I love her . . . ? She is really rather a charming girl, apart from being a Queen. . . . Ah, well—time will show! There is plenty of time to think about it . . . !

And, no doubt, whatever their lips may have said, that was the thought that was in their heads as they parted—there is plenty of time!

And so they met and parted, for the first time since Victoria's accession—and the Prince went home and wrote in his Diary that he had been to see Queen Victoria “ by

appointment," and that she had "received him most graciously."

The one definite result of this meeting seems have been that in November, 1837, Prince George was appointed a Colonel in the British Army, by brevet. He did not meet Queen Victoria again, except on rare official or semi-official occasions, until they had their next intimate contact at a State ball, given at Buckingham Palace on May 9th, 1838.

This was a very magnificent affair, and the ball-room was crowded with what was probably the gayest throng that had assembled there since the late King's death.

Queen Victoria looked her best. As one observer has recorded : "The scene was magnificent and Her Majesty looked indeed a fit Leader of Revels. In a singularly beautiful dress, and with the natural bloom of youth on her cheeks brightened and accentuated by the excitement of the occasion, she not only looked every inch a Queen, but nearer to being beautiful than one would imagine possible. One feels that more gaiety would be of inestimable advantage to her—undoubtedly she takes life, in the ordinary way, far too seriously. . . ."

This seems likely enough. After the extremely quiet and secluded existence she had led for so many years, almost any scene of crowded life excited her—furthermore, she loved dancing almost above all forms of amusement. And she looked her best at balls.

It is significant that, upon this occasion, H.R.H. was chosen for a signal honour—he opened the ball with the Queen. Lord Melbourne, the Prime Minister, must have heard this news with pleasure, for at this time one of his greatest concerns was undoubtedly to arrange a fit and proper marriage for his Queen, and to obtain the right sort of Consort for his country.

One imagines that another gentleman regarded the position with a somewhat different expression. Baron Stockmar, the same young doctor who had been the friend of King Leopold and the ill-fated Princess Charlotte, was now an important figure at the Court—very near to the person of Queen Victoria, and still the friend and confidant of his old patron, King Leopold of the Belgians. It was probably because of this that Victoria showed him so much favour, and laid much store by his advice, for she was still devoted to her Uncle Leopold.

At that time Baron Stockmar was, as it were, the Serpent (not that there was actually anything of the serpent about him—he seems to have been a sincere and honest man) in the Royal Garden of Eden which Lord Melbourne and one or two others were trying to plan. For he did not at all favour the idea of Victoria marrying her cousin George. In common with King Leopold he had other plans, and there seems to be little doubt that the eventual solution of the problem of Queen Victoria's marriage owed much to his efforts.

In the meantime Queen Victoria danced with His Royal Highness Prince George, and the world—or most of it—looked on with approval :

“ Do you like dancing, Cousin George ? ”

“ Why, yes, Ma'am—well enough ! ”

“ Oh, is that all ? ” with a little pout. “ I simply adore it ! Indeed, I think I would be dancing most of the time if I had my way. But, alas, one cannot have much of one's own way in this life, I am afraid ! ”

“ It seems so, indeed ! ”

“ And so you really do not care for dancing—George ? ”

“ Oh, I wouldn't go so far as to say that. But I am afraid I do not shine overmuch in the—the more frivolous accomplishments ! ”

"No? You prefer riding—the hunting-field, the military manœuvres, and so on, I suppose . . . ?"

Was this another shaft aimed at his *amour-propre*? George grew a little sulky. Nevertheless, Victoria continued to enjoy the ball to the full, for she did not retire until an early hour in the morning.

The Prince never makes any direct reference to his personal feelings towards Queen Victoria, during that period, in his Diary, but there may be some significance in his record of that particular occasion :

" . . . We are just come back (4 o'clock) from a most magnificent Ball at Buckingham Palace. . . . I opened the Ball with Her Majesty, and I thought she danced very nicely, and seemed very much amused. . . . The only drawback was that the thing was kept up too late, for almost everybody had gone before the Queen retired. . . ."

The last being, one imagines, a fact he would hardly have complained of had he been really attracted by Victoria, or anxious to enjoy her society!

Of somewhat similar significance is an entry in the Diary just prior to this, wherein he records the events of his nineteenth birthday, and gives a list of some of his presents :

" . . . I had some most acceptable and nice presents. My father gave me £40, my mother £20, and the Queen Dowager £40, my sister Augusta a clock, Aunts Mary and Sophia the whole set of the Duke of Wellington's and Lord Wellesley's despatches, the Duke of Sussex a gold chain, Colonel Cornwall a very nice edition of Molière, Mr. Wood a remarkably good portrait of himself, Lady Jersey some studs, the Queen Victoria (*I beg her pardon*

*for not having mentioned her before<sup>1</sup>) a most beautiful and complete silver dressing-case, the Duchess of Kent some splendid prints, &c."*

There is, perhaps, some significance to be found both in the form the Queen's present took, and certainly in the fact that H.R.H. left mention of her name until so far down the list—and *then became conscious that he had done so*. Not quite like a young lover, or even one who contemplated becoming one!

There is no further reference to the Queen in the Diary until June 28th, 1838, when he writes :

" To-day was a very busy day for all of us, and at the same time a most important one for the country at large. Queen Victoria was crowned Queen of England. God grant that her reign may be happy to herself, and glorious to the nation, and that she may not forget the great duties she has to perform towards her people by maintaining the Constitution of this great country both as regards Church and State. . . ."

He then goes on to describe at great length the ceremonial, but does not refer to Victoria again until near the end of the long entry, when he mentions :

" . . . The Queen, I think, looked less well than usual, but on the whole was very graceful and dignified. . . ."

And again, a little later on :

" . . . All the foreign ambassadors, the various members of the Royal family, the Queen's attendants, and at last the Queen herself, had a most imposing effect . . . !"

From these very brief references it is quite plain that the young Prince was far more interested in the ceremony itself than in the principal character therein.

<sup>1</sup> The italics are inserted.

It may be gathered that, whatever the ideas of Lord Melbourne and of Victoria herself regarding a possible union between these two cousins, the Prince himself was not by any means enthralled by the idea.

There were no further contacts between the two young people during this period, for within three months of the Coronation Prince George had left the country to serve with the army at Gibraltar and did not return to England until just before the Queen's marriage to Prince Albert.

And in these two facts—that he left so soon after the Coronation, and that he returned only just prior to the marriage—there would seem to be an underlying significance.

We are told that “it was felt that the range of the Prince's military experience *could not too soon* be extended, and accordingly arrangements were made for him to serve for a period on the Staff at Gibraltar !”

Now at this time the Prince was only nineteen years of age. His ordinary education could have hardly been completed. He had been less than two years in the British Army, and during that time had had little practical experience. Rather obviously the thing to do was for him to see some service in England before going abroad, and one feels that in the normal course of events this is what would have happened. It will be noted that in the phrase italicized above it is practically admitted that he *was* sent abroad at an unusually early stage, both as regards his years and his military training.

And why was this done ?

History does not relate. One can rely only on the comments and gossip of the moment, but there would seem to be little doubt that the reason was to kill the marriage idea, and to prevent further intimate contacts with the Queen.



INN. WILLIAM IV  
In the picture, by Sir Virtu Shet



ALBERT PRINCE CONSORT  
From the painting by F. Z. Winterhalter



At whose door the instigation of this move may be laid, no one can say. It is fairly certain, however, that it was not Victoria herself who arranged it. It may have been due to the (perfectly well-intentioned) machinations of Baron Stockmar, whose aim it was that either Albert of Saxe-Coburg, or his brother Ernest, should occupy the vacant half of the throne. Or it may well have been that Prince George himself mooted the idea, in his anxiety to get out of what was for him a very embarrassing position.

It is said that Lord Melbourne was "greatly annoyed" about it, and that he even went so far as to speak to Victoria herself, with the idea of getting the Prince's new appointment cancelled.

"Does he himself wish to go?" asked the Queen.

To which Lord Melbourne is said to have replied, with great diplomacy:

"He is very distressed at the idea of leaving his parents—and friends—Ma'am!"

"Is that all?" said the Queen, frigidly. "Well, you may make it clear to him that he need not go unless he really wishes to. But I expressly forbid you to mention that I have said anything about it, or even discussed the matter!"

What Lord Melbourne said to Prince George about it, and what Prince George replied thereto, again history does not record, but the fact remains that, on September 21st, 1838, H.R.H. left London *en route* for Gibraltar, and with his departure the last hopes of those who had desired the projected union were finally dashed to the ground.

Had these hopes been fulfilled the whole history of the Victorian Era would have been very materially changed, for Prince George outlived his Royal mistress by several years, and there would have been no "Widow of Windsor."

## CHAPTER XIII

PRINCE GEORGE, 1838-9

“ **T**O-DAY was the painful day of separation. However, to break it as much as possible, I started this evening and spent the morning quite as usual. I drove the four-in-hand first, and then after breakfast drove out again with my mother. After luncheon I rode out and took a long ride, riding Hector, a charming little horse. Before dinner I packed up my little trifles, and then we dined as usual. At 11.30, everything being ready, I took leave of my dear Parents and Sisters. It was a most painful moment, such a one as I shall never forget as long as I live, and I must confess that I never suffered so much. The only hope is that in less than a year I shall have the great good pleasure of seeing them all again. God bless them all ! ”

So wrote the Prince in his Diary under the date of September 21st, 1838—the day of his departure to take up his new life and duties on the Rock of Gibraltar. The entry clearly demonstrates how affectionate was the Prince’s nature, and how he clung to the near proximity of those he loved.

But it is significant to note that there is a complete absence of any regret at leaving England, such as he has expressed in his Diary on earlier occasions when going abroad.

The Prince embarked at Falmouth, reaching that port

via Salisbury and Exeter, "where (notes the Prince) we had tea and mutton chops. . . ."

Of Falmouth the Prince has recorded his impression that the town was not pretty, but very clean, and that the women were handsome. It would seem that, in most cases when viewing any spot new to him, his first impression was always the picturesqueness or otherwise of the scene, secondly its cleanliness or otherwise, thirdly the looks of the women, and fourthly the costumes worn by the people he saw. He seems to have considered good looks and fine clothes as important amenities of his surroundings.

Colonel Cornwall accompanied the Prince, and on September 24th they embarked in the steamship which was to carry them to their first destination, Lisbon.

The Prince records that he "felt low and very uncomfortable" and that he speedily retired to his cabin, where he lay in his bunk all day and was unable to eat. He adds that: "there was a good swell when we were off the Lizard Point, so much so that even Colonel Cornwall was ill . . . !"

On the 26th their vessel touched at Vigo to deliver mails, and H.R.H. admits that he was very glad of the opportunity to get ashore for a while.

He seems to have been greatly impressed by his voyage up the Tagus, which he describes as "that noble river."

Eventually arrived at Lisbon, he took up his residence at the house of the British Consul, just then absent in England. There in Lisbon, for the first time on record, he adopted an incognito, and called himself "Lord Culloden." He complains in his Diary that he went to visit the King and Queen at the Palace of the "Necessidades" under that name, but "unfortunately they sent

a carriage for me in state, and so on, so that my incognito was entirely at an end."

One is tempted to ask why he should have even wanted to hide his real identity? And the answer would seem to be that, in Portugal as elsewhere, the prospects of his marriage to Victoria had been much discussed, and that he did not want to be stared and gaped at by the crowd as the Prince who had left his country to escape an unwanted bride and a share of its throne!

H.R.H. dined at the Palace that evening and comments on "a private dinner, servants well-dressed and dinner beautifully served"—another demonstration of his attention to such details.

After spending some days in Portugal, and travelling to various places of interest—notably to Caldas, where he had what was perhaps his first experience of the rougher side of soldiering, for he stayed at a small inn where, he says: ". . . the animals of every description, such as bugs, fleas, flies, etc., were so bad, that I did not undress at all, but lay down in my clothes"—H.R.H. finally embarked in the *Tagus* for Gibraltar, where he landed at eight o'clock on October 9th.

On landing, the Prince was received by a guard of honour of the 33rd Regiment, and had several of the principal officers of the Garrison presented to him. He and Colonel Cornwall then drove to the Convent, where they breakfasted with General Sir Alexander Woodford (on whose Staff H.R.H. was to serve) and Lady Woodford. He afterwards inspected the Garrison, consisting of five companies of Artillery, one of Sappers, and six Regiments of the Line—the 33rd, 46th, 48th, 52nd, 81st, and 82nd.

Later he dined at the Convent, and described the affair as: ". . . a large dinner, and I was introduced to several

people, which is not the most amusing thing in the world. . . ."

He seems to have been rather troubled by all the introductions and presentations, but evidently got through the ordeal quite creditably, for in a letter from his father, dated October 24th, the Duke says : ". . . Sir Alexander writes me word that he is delighted at the manner in which you had received the officers of the Garrison when they were presented to you, and that every one was pleased with you. . . ."

Prince George was attached to the 33rd Regiment, to be drilled and to "learn his duty," to use his own words. By the end of October he had done so well that General Woodford announced that he could in future serve as a Major.

However, it is noticeable that the Prince did not stick to his duties with such tenacity, or work so hard with his regiment, as to justify his being sent to Gibraltar in such a hurry, or at such an early stage in his military career. He remained on the Rock only a little over six months, and during that period found time to make a number of excursions on to the mainland, where we are told he saw something of such places as Ceuta, Tetuan, Tangiers, Granada, Cadiz, and Seville.

Some extracts from a letter from his father during his stay at Gibraltar also seem to have some significance, in view of the position between himself and Queen Victoria prior to his departure.

For instance :

" . . . It is now time for me to speak to you about your future plans, and *what would be best for you to do on your leaving Gibraltar*. You are now of an age to judge for yourself,<sup>1</sup> at least to be able to say if you think that what is proposed will really be of use to you. . . ."

<sup>1</sup> The italics are inserted.

The Duke goes on to speak of the advantage of his fully completing his course of instruction under the tutelage of Major Hall, and then continues : ". . . And therefore I am assured that you will find the advantage, and I may even add the necessity,<sup>1</sup> of your not quitting Gibraltar till you feel you have ended what you have begun. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

After saying which the Duke goes on to suggest a tour around the coast of the Mediterranean, and through Switzerland, suggesting that at the end of the tour arrangements might be made for him to meet his parents somewhere on the Continent, and finishing up with : " After having said this I will add that your dear *Mama* fully agrees with me in everything I have written. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

This letter was dated from England on February 16th, 1839, and in view of the fact that it has been said that a few days before it was despatched the Duke was seen on one occasion " in earnest conversation with Lord Melbourne," it should be no more difficult for us to read between the lines than, presumably, it was for the Prince to do so.

It would almost appear that, in effect, this letter says : " If you have made up your mind that you do not desire this marriage, you had better not return to England just yet, but if you have decided the other way, then there is yet time, if you return fairly soon—but on the whole we think you'd better stay away."

Already the names of the two Princes of Saxe-Coburg, Ernest and Albert, were being bandied about by the gossips of the Court as likely consorts for the young Queen. And it would seem from the tone of this letter, and the elaborate suggestions as to how Prince George might fill in the next few months, that both the Duke and

<sup>1</sup> Titles inserted

the Duchess had been won over to Stockmar's ideas in regard to this. Or perhaps it was only that they realized that marriage with Victoria would not spell happiness for their son. In any case, it seems quite clear that, whatever their wishes may have been in the first place, they were no longer in any way anxious for such a union.

H.R.H. fell in with their plans—not merely without demur, but with some eagerness. He agreed to remain at Gibraltar until he had finished his course of instruction from Major Hall, and afterwards to go on a Continental tour.

He was very popular on the "Rock" with all ranks and classes. When it was known, in March, that he intended shortly to depart, the officers of the Garrison decided to present him with a sword as a mark of their goodwill and esteem. They had actually given instructions for it to be made in England, when on March 17th they received a letter from the Horse Guards desiring that the idea should be abandoned, and pointing out that it was contrary to a general order then in force to the effect that on no account should officers serving in the Army be given, or permitted to receive, "public marks of esteem or favour in the form of presents."

"Thus," writes H.R.H. in his Diary, "I am unfortunately deprived of this valuable gift. The compliment and kind intentions of the Officers, towards me remains the same, and I feel it deeply, but at the same time I must confess I should have been glad of having the sword itself, which in after days would have reminded me in a most pleasing manner of my stay at Gibraltar, and of the good opinion of those with whom I have the honour of being associated. . . ."

The project was duly abandoned, and the Prince decidedly disappointed.

On March 26th, his birthday, at noon, all the officers

in command of regiments and all the heads of departments attended to offer their congratulations—"which," writes the Prince, "I took as a great mark of attention and favour."

On April 25th, Prince George relinquished his duties on the Gibraltar Staff, and sailed for Malta in the *Acteon*, commanded by Lieutenant Kennedy.

He embarked at 8 a.m., and found all the important officers and civilian officials drawn up to bid him farewell. The good-byes were said with regrets on both sides, and the Prince comments: ". . . I had lived so long amongst them that I felt as belonging to them, they had all been so friendly towards me. . . ."

It will be noted that H.R.H. was intensely appreciative of kindness and courtesy in others, and took friendship as readily as he gave it.

As the *Acteon* headed for the sea, salutes were fired both from the fortress and from H.M.S. *Wasp*, then lying off the Rock.

Five days later the Prince arrived at Malta, where he was received on landing by Sir Henry Bouverie, and a guard of honour. He stayed at the Palace, where he was apportioned the same suite of rooms which had, on a previous occasion, been occupied by Queen Adelaide. In the afternoon he was visited by the Admiral, Sir Robert Stopford, and all the principal officers of the Fleet. In the evening he went to the Opera.

The next few days were spent in inspecting the troops and visiting the various vessels of the Fleet, by which H.R.H. seems to have been considerably impressed. Of Admiral Stopford's flagship, the *Princess Charlotte*, he writes: ". . . I must own I have never seen anything more beautiful . . . we saw how the guns were worked, and I have never seen such precision. . . ."

The Garrison gave a ball in honour of the Prince, in regard to which he comments : “ . . . Afterwards to a big Ball that the Garrison gave me, which was very pretty. It was a fine Room, but I cannot say that I saw many pretty faces . . . ! ”

He inspected the Seaforth Highlanders, who were at that time quartered at Malta, and of these : “ . . . I had not before seen a Scottish Regiment, and cannot express how agreeable an impression the beautiful garb made on me. I have never seen anything so beautiful, and they manœuvred admirably. . . . ”

There is an entry in the Diary, under the date of May 16th, which may have some significance :

“ This morning at 12, the steamer from Gibraltar arrived, and brought me many letters, and very good news from home. . . . ”

He gives no hint as to what that good news might have been. Could it have been anything regarding Albert of Saxe-Coburg—a coming event casting its shadow . . . ?

On the same day he sailed in the steamer *Hermes* to Corfu, which he reached on the 20th, and where he was received very ceremoniously by the High Commissioner, with the Military and the Senate, as well as the principal civil officials. He lodged at the Castle, and expresses himself as being “ quite enchanted with the lovely country.”

Under the date of May 24th we find his first direct reference to Queen Victoria since leaving England !

“ To-day is the Queen’s birthday, may Heaven pour upon her all that is good on earth, and may she make the beautiful and great country she governs happy ! We had an extraordinarily fatiguing day. . . . ”

On May 30th H.R.H. left Corfu in an Ionian steamer commanded by one Captain Galvazo—"a very entertaining Italian"—*en route* for Athens and a cruise around the Ionian Islands.

At Athens, on June 5th, he received a batch of English newspapers, and learned of the resignation of the Whigs, of Sir Robert Peel's abortive attempt to form a Ministry, and of Melbourne's return to power. His comment on this is rather illuminating :

" . . . In consequence the Melbourne administration has returned. I am unutterably sorry for this, and God only knows what will now happen. I hope for the best, and think that the Ministry will not long hold together."

It would seem that H.R.H. had no partiality for Lord Melbourne, and one wonders why? Could it have been on account of his match-making efforts in '38 . . . ?

The Diary, which during this period is written in German (the idea being that later the Prince could read from it to his German relatives), gives lengthy descriptions of his tour, but is of little general interest.

Eventually he returned to England in November, after the visit to this country of the two Princes of Saxe-Coburg Gotha, and when it was generally known in the more intimate circles of the Court, though not officially announced, that Victoria had selected the Prince Albert for her future Consort.

No mention of this in the Diary, however, until, under the date of December 15th, H.R.H. writes : " After dinner papa got a letter from the young Queen, in which she announces her marriage with Prince Albert of Coburg." And to that he naïvely adds : ". . . Nothing could have given me greater pleasure than this intelligence. . . ."

## CHAPTER XIV

QUEEN VICTORIA, 1838-9

QUEEN VICTORIA, in those years immediately following her accession, was in no hurry to get married.

Monarchs, and especially those of constitutional countries, cannot be said to enjoy very much real liberty, but to Victoria, after the terribly cramped life she had led for many years, guarded day and night by female dragons, her accession spelt more liberty than she had ever known before !

For the first time she was able to enjoy privacy. She could sit by herself, if she wished. She could—and did—turn everybody else out of the room and be by herself ! She could even sleep at night without a guardian in her room !

She could send her everlastingly interfering mother away when she felt so disposed. She could even keep the inimitable Lehzen in her place, and although that lady still retained an enormous influence over her Royal mistress, her power in the period following the accession was nothing to what it had been in the old Kensington Palace days.

Victoria was like a child let out of school at long last. She could please herself whether she stood up or sat down, and need no longer put her hands behind her back every time she was called upon to speak !

And there is not the slightest doubt but that she enjoyed her new sense of liberty and power to the full, and had no desire to curtail it by marrying and sharing with someone else even the remotest corner of her throne.

However Lord Melbourne, for whom she had the highest regard, and on whom she leaned in those days so heavily and persistently, took pains to impress upon the young Queen the necessity for an early marriage. There were multiple reasons for such a step, and hardly one of them could be gainsaid. One of the strongest was the still persisting bogey of the ultimate succession of the Duke of Cumberland, now King of Hanover ("the be-whiskered Hanoverian Horror," as a wit had named him), which would inevitably come to pass should Victoria die young and without issue. (One would like to have seen on Queen Victoria's face the reflection of the turmoil aroused in her prudish mind when Melbourne boldly and frankly stated this, the most urgent reason for an early marriage !)

But even this most poignant reason did not move her. She agreed that it would be a deplorable thing if the Duke should come to the throne, but pointed out that as she was young and strong, there seemed no likelihood of such an event coming to pass. She sympathized very sweetly with Lord Melbourne, and all the others who were fretting themselves over the possibility of Cumberland's succession, but suggested that it was rather a matter of crossing bridges before one came to them !

Melbourne pointed out that marriage with the right man would materially strengthen the new Queen's position in every way. As it was, she was almost entirely unknown to her subjects. Her life, hitherto, had been spent in a seclusion from the outer world almost equal to that of the cloister. The public had hardly ever seen her ; the people of the Court itself regarded her almost as

a stranger. Few of them had ever spoken to her, for in all her public appearances she had been kept severely in the background, the centre-stage being always held by her mother.

In such circumstances, Lord Melbourne tactfully pointed out, one could hardly expect people to have any great faith or confidence in their new ruler. Her extreme youth, her complete inexperience, and her past seclusion were all against that—apart from the fact that always there was a prejudice against a queen reigning alone.

To which Victoria replied, a little tartly, to the effect that that could soon be put right. The proof of the pudding was in the eating. People should have a taste of her, and see what she was like !

Pertinently she demanded to be told the effect of her first Councils. What sort of effect had her personality had upon those chiefly concerned—Peel, Wellington, Croker, Greville, and the rest of them ? Were they disappointed in her ? Fearful that she would not be able to reign successfully even for a few years alone ?

Melbourne had to admit that the effect had been a good one—everybody who had come into contact with her was enthusiastic. But . . .

Were there any bad mistakes she had made since her accession ?

No, certainly not. On the contrary, she had acted throughout with discretion and sound good sense.

Then, said Victoria, triumphantly, why all this bother about marriage ? Why this altogether unseemly haste ?

She sweetened the pill by adding that, with the brains and experience of Lord Melbourne at her service, and she ready to listen and heed every word of his advice (except, of course, on this ridiculous business of marriage !) she could hardly go wrong, anyway.

Oh, of course she'd have to marry in due course—she realized that—but the due course might well be extended into two or three years at least. There was no hurry—all in good time . . . !

Melbourne went away, defeated—but only temporarily. Almost immediately he was back on to the subject again, and it seems to be more than probable that this time he had something in the nature of a concrete proposition to moot—though no doubt he did it very delicately. Her cousin, the young Prince George, son of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. Such a handsome, gallant, good young fellow. . . . How popular even the idea of such a union would be throughout the length and breadth of the land. . . .

It seems likely that Victoria, already learning quite a lot about diplomacy and the handling of Ministers and advisers with bees in their bonnets, decided that some show of considering the matter would probably make life easier for her, and keep the persistent Melbourne quiet on this particularly annoying subject for a time at least.

Well, all right ! From what she had seen and heard of the young Prince she gathered that he was quite a personable and charming young man, and it could do no harm if she saw a little more of him—got to know him a little more intimately. . . .

No doubt Lord Melbourne went off highly delighted—maybe leaving the young Queen laughing gently into her sleeve . . . !

That fateful Wednesday appointment was probably the result. On that occasion the Queen may or may not have been taking the matter seriously. She may have regarded it merely as a means of quietening her over-persistent Prime Minister. Or she may have said to

herself both on this and that second occasion when she opened the ball with Prince George, that since she obviously had to marry someone, sooner or later, and the choice in any case was rather limited, why not His Royal Highness as well as anyone else ?

But, whether she was serious or not, she would most certainly expect George to be in the very deadliest of earnest, and in those circumstances it is more than likely that his conduct on those two occasions, and the rather remarkable manner in which he left the country so soon after them, may have given rise to somewhat un-regal feelings of pique.

In any case it is fairly certain that it gave her a sense of proprietary interest in Prince George and his doings, which was to have its repercussion in days to come !

Prince George's departure from England must have been something of a blow to Lord Melbourne. But the disappointment he felt was probably considerably softened by the fact that his Great Responsibility, the young Queen, had done much to justify her arguments to him on the first occasion on which the subject of matrimony had been brought up.

The Court and the public had had a taste of the pudding—and they seemed to be liking it !

Her Ministers, and those who had come into contact with her in Court life, were all enormously impressed by her demeanour and the abundant evidences of her capability.

As for the public, they saw their Girl-Queen driving through the streets—young, attractive, modest, and gracious, and they waved their handkerchiefs, flung their hats into the air and roared their approval of her to the skies.

Lord John Russell, with magnificent eloquence, had

sounded her praises oratorically, and his sentiments had been received everywhere with the utmost enthusiasm. He expressed his hope and his belief that Queen Victoria would emulate good Queen Bess, without her petty tyranny, and Queen Anne, shorn of her weaknesses. He prophesied with the most confident optimism that Victoria would abolish slavery, diminish crime, and improve education. That she would make England a country really fit for free-born Englishmen to live in. He suggested that all alive at that time should consider themselves privileged to see, at any rate, the beginning of what he confidently believed would prove to be one of the greatest reigns in the whole course of English history.

All this was very satisfactory to Lord Melbourne. What was almost equally satisfactory was that the hydra-headed serpent called Scandal no longer squirmed around the Court, leaving its trail of slime everywhere, as it had done in the recent times of the Georges and the Williams. It seemed that a Virgin Court was also likely to be a pure one. So there was something to be said for a Virgin Court, and the question of marriage and a Consort might well rest for a little while.

But not for too long. It seemed that Prince George had, for some reason, proved a failure—but there were still very excellent fish in the Royal matrimonial sea who would not refuse a skilfully dangled bait. Stockmar had been dropping some faint but unmistakable hints about those two Coburg Princes. Well, one would have to see . . . !

Meanwhile Victoria was rapidly finding her regal feet, and finding them pleasant to walk upon. She had commenced by summarily disposing of her mother.

Immediately after her first Council she had insisted, against her mother's will, on spending an hour in complete privacy.

"But, my dear, *why . . . ?*" the bewildered Duchess had asked.

"Because I wish it, Mam!" was the firm reply—and, in the circumstances, there was no answer to *that*.

Doubtless she gave the same reason when, immediately on emerging from her hour of retirement, she ordered that her bed should be moved from her mother's room, and again there was no reply to be made, other than a tearful protest which had no effect whatever.

And as she had begun, so she continued. Her mother was gently but very firmly relegated to the background, and made to remain there!

The Baroness Lehzen was luckier—or more clever. She lost her supremacy over the girl she had mastered for so many years, but not her influence. She retained that by her discretion and diplomacy—and because Victoria had a genuine love for her. Lehzen kept well in the background; never sought to obtrude herself on her late pupil. But in that background she was firmly planted and very much alive. She was and remained the power—or at any rate one of the principal powers—behind the throne. This was a pity. Her influence over the Queen was extreme—and she was essentially a jealous, narrow-minded, prudish and provincial type, and with it all acute, vigorous, and with an impressive personality. She was undoubtedly responsible for much of the dreary prudery and bigotry of the Victorian Court. It is significant that, although Victoria now enjoyed the privilege of sleeping alone, Lehzen occupied an adjoining room with a communicating door.

But she was luckily not the only influence, on the more or less private side, over the still somewhat plastic mind of the young Queen. Baron Stockmar, shortly after Victoria took up her residence at Buckingham Palace,

became a member of the household. There was something of a compensating balance here, for Stockmar was honest, disinterested, and, for his period, both far-seeing and broad-minded. Lord Melbourne said of him that he was one of the cleverest men he had ever known, and also the most discreet, well-judging and cool. Certainly he must have acted as something of a counter-irritant to the influence of the Baroness.

And Baron Stockmar rather fancied himself as a Royal match-maker, especially since he had so successfully stage-managed the marriage in 1836 between Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg and Queen Maria II of Portugal. Not only had he the Queen's ear himself, but he had also that of Lord Melbourne, and to Lord Melbourne the Queen *had* to listen.

But, for the meantime, the question of marriage was shelved. Whatever the Baron Stockmar and Lord Melbourne might think about it, they said nothing. It would seem that both now realized the obstinacy of their Royal Mistress and that a fitting opportunity would have to be awaited before the subject could be safely broached again.

The young Victoria was having her fling. Not much of a fling, as the modern standards of young people go, but to herself she seemed to be leading the gayest of lives. She was like a child with a new toy—not that it is for one moment suggested that she took her cares of State otherwise than with extreme seriousness. But she still managed to have what was, for her, a really good time.

Yet (probably one of the results of her "regimental" bringing-up) each day passed much the same as any other in the Court. The routine was almost the same.

Every morning was devoted to the business of the State. Interviews with Lord Melbourne, and other Ministers



QUEEN VICTORIA  
From the painting by Sir George Hayter



(sometimes). The signing of documents. Much writing. Her Majesty wrote an amazing amount, one way and another. It has been estimated that she must have written on an average some five thousand words per day.

In the afternoon she rode, usually accompanied by Lord Melbourne, and generally with the majority of her Court in attendance. She wore a riding-habit of velvet, and a tall-hat (gentleman's pattern) with a veil hung round the brim. She liked to ride both far and fast, and returned from these expeditions highly exhilarated.

After that a splash of real gaiety—maybe a game of battledore and shuttlecock.

Then dinner, a dull and ceremonious affair—rendered all the more so for the gentlemen by the fact that the Queen rigidly insisted—in spite of the frank protests of Lord Melbourne—on them only remaining a very few minutes alone over their wine. So was the after-dinner drunkenness which had been so much a feature of the Court of the Georges and Williams eliminated, and Her Majesty ignored the veiled protests and sulky faces of her gentlemen with entire serenity.

The assembly in the drawing-room after dinner was a singularly dull and stiff affair. Thanks again to the secluded life she had always led, Victoria was not a good conversationalist, and, although she made a point of having a few words with every one of her guests—unless, for some reason, one or another was out of favour—the dialogue was never either bright or stimulating.

Mr. Greville, in an unpublished part of his *Memoirs*, gives an example of a typical conversation she had with him, in the drawing-room after dinner on March 11th, 1838 :

Asked the Queen, with a gracious smile :

“ Have you been riding to-day, Mr. Greville ? ”

" No, Madame, I have not ! "

" It was a fine day," comments the Queen.

" Yes, Madam, a very fine day."

" It was rather cold, though. Your sister, Lady Frances Egerton, rides, I think, doesn't she ? "

" She does ride sometimes, Madam."

There follows a short and rather uncomfortable pause, and then Mr. Greville ventures to take the lead, but not, of course, to change the subject !

" Has Your Majesty been riding to-day ? " asks Mr. Greville.

" Oh, yes—a very long ride ! " is the answer, with more animation than she has yet shown.

" Has Your Majesty got a nice horse ? "

" Oh, a very nice horse ! "

And here Her Majesty decides that time is up—Mr. Greville has had his quota of attention. And so, with a smile and a gracious nod, the Queen passes on to the next guest, leaving Mr. Greville, no doubt, feeling highly honoured and considerably stimulated !

Occasionally the Queen attended the Opera or a play. She was still a devotee of the ballet, but apparently did not take so kindly to Shakespeare. On one occasion, she mentions that she found the character of Hamlet ". . . very difficult, and I may say almost incomprehensible . . ." but admired the rendering of it by Charles Kean the Younger. It is on record that she was much puzzled by *King Lear*, and regarded it as " a strange, horrible business."<sup>1</sup>

But she undoubtedly got nearer to real gaiety and *joie de vivre* when there was a dance on the day's programme. We have her own word for it that she " adored dancing," and she would seize with eagerness the smallest pretext

<sup>1</sup> Strachey, p. 71.

to command one. We are told that : “ . . . in the mazes of the dance, with youthful joyous figures all about her, she became most joyous also, and would forget herself (and even Lord M.) entirely . . . ! ”

The Coronation came, and the young Queen seemed to take it quite easily in her stride. She said of it : “ I shall ever remember this as the *proudest* day of my life ! ” But its effect does not seem to have been lasting, for shortly after her return to the Palace, while the crowd were still outside clamouring for a further sight of her, she was found by a shocked and angry Lehzen alone in her own room, stripped of her regal baubles, and calmly giving her pet dog a bath !

The months passed, and Victoria continued to enjoy herself and to exercise her authority with discretion—but also with considerable firmness when she felt called upon to do so. As, for instance, when she put her beloved Uncle Leopold, King of the Belgians, right in his place on an attempt by him to interfere unduly with herself and her politics.

Prince George had departed for his military duties at Gibraltar. What Victoria thought of this move on his part (if such it was, and it would seem so) we have no record. But we do know that she followed his movements with a certain amount of interest, and had news of him from time to time.

Soon after the opening of the second year of her reign both Stockmar and Melbourne commenced once more to show signs of restlessness in the matter of the marriage. Stockmar merely dropped the subtlest hints—but Lord Melbourne, as was his wont, was plainer and more direct.

But Victoria said :

“ Let it rest ! There is plenty of time to consider that later. I am doing very well, am I not, by myself ? ”

There was certainly no gainsaying that—at the moment. But before a month or so had passed things assumed a somewhat different complexion.

Victoria had stamped out with a firm and obstinate hand the drunkenness and licentiousness that had distinguished the Courts of her predecessors. But one rampant Court evil she had not succeeded in killing—gossip and ill-natured tittle-tattle.

Lady Flora Hastings was one of the maids of honour attached to the person of the Duchess of Kent in her more-or-less exile at Kensington.

Lady Flora had been a member of the household for some years, and had played a prominent part in the hostilities which rocked the family foundations at Kensington Palace prior to Victoria's accession—hostilities which had arisen because of familiarities alleged to have taken place between Sir John Conroy and the Duchess. This had been, almost certainly, the first occasion upon which Victoria had taken sides against her mother. She had been supported in this by Madame de Spaeth and the Baroness Lehzen. Madame de Spaeth had been indiscreet over the affair, and was summarily dismissed. The Duchess would have sent Lehzen after her, but this could not be managed—the Baroness was far too clever.

One of the Duchess's supporters in this regrettable affair was Lady Flora, who made a dead set at Lehzen. She would make Lehzen writhe by satirical observations on her humble birth, and the habit she still retained of eating caraway seeds with almost every meal.

Now Sir John Conroy had gone—banished for ever from Buckingham Palace by Victoria, but still retained his position in the household of the Duchess.

Lehzen still hated Lady Flora with a cold and bitter

hatred, which sentiment Lady Flora reciprocated in a far more animated manner. Victoria hated Lady Flora because of her enmity towards Lehzen.

Such then was the position, when early in 1839 certain changes were noticed in Lady Flora's figure. Immediately the gossips got busy. Heads were put together. Whispers filled the air.

It was freely stated that Lady Flora was *enceinte*. Her general health was noticeably bad, and conformed to the general symptoms of her alleged condition.

Soon wafts of the gossip came to her ears. She immediately took a strong line and vigorously denied the accusation. Thereafter she went to Sir James Clark, the Royal physician, who, most improperly, told some of his closest intimates of the consultation and all about it.

Instantly the gossip that had hitherto merely smouldered burst into roaring flames. The Duchess very gallantly and very vigorously defended her lady.

Information came to the Queen herself. Perhaps because she regarded Lady Flora with such intense dislike, or possibly merely because she regarded the accusation as the most serious that could be made against anyone however remotely attached to the Court, Victoria was disposed to take a line far stronger than it was merciful. The uproar was enormous !

At last the most unprecedented thing happened.

Lady Flora required, or was required, to submit herself to a medical examination !

She underwent the ordeal. The examination was carried out by Sir James Clark and another doctor. The result was that both doctors signed a certificate stating that the lady was certainly *not* in the condition suspected.

But Lady Flora was not disposed to let the matter end there ! She had now a very nice lever, and she fully

intended to pull on it with all her strength ! She enlisted the aid of her family, and the Hastings were socially both powerful and influential.

The head of the family, Lord Hastings, was furious. He demanded an audience with the Queen, urging that Sir James Clark should be ignominiously dismissed. The Queen coldly expressed her regret for what had happened, but did not dismiss Sir James. Lord Hastings wrote to the papers about it, and the flames of the scandal swept like wildfire through the length and breadth of the whole country.

Public indignation flared up in defence of a maligned and persecuted lady.

For perhaps the first time in her reign, Queen Victoria had acted without discretion. She had permitted herself to become personally involved in what, as its best, can only be described as a most malicious and disgraceful affair. It is true that, so far as Sir James was concerned, she was in a very awkward position, for he could not be dismissed without a public inquiry, and that would only tend to make things worse.<sup>1</sup> But she should have taken steps to quieten matters at an earlier stage, and it is difficult not to feel that she had refrained from doing this because of her intense dislike for the enemy and traducer of her beloved Lehzen.

The first news of the affair, noised abroad, had produced a public reaction against the young Queen. The fact that, after all the pother, Sir James Clark remained at Court, considerably strengthened it—the public were not to know the difficulties which beset the question of his dismissal.

The Hastings family also took it to heart, and were very antagonistic. The situation was highly unpleasant.

<sup>1</sup> Greville, August 15th, 1839 (unpublished).

Victoria was a little inclined to blame (by no means unjustly) Lord Melbourne. He was still more disposed to blame Lehzen.

There was no doubt that the popularity of the new Queen had been severely shaken, not only with the man-in-the-street, but with the higher grades of society as well.

The affair also had its political effects. The Hastings were strong Tories. There was much overt talk, and many unpleasant rumours, about the Whiggishness of the Queen. Melbourne was attacked furiously by the Tory papers, instigated, no doubt, by Lord Hastings.

By the beginning of May, Melbourne's Ministry was swaying on its heels; on an important point of policy they could only realize a majority of five votes. Melbourne decided to take the only dignified post, and resign.

Victoria wept when the news reached her. It was the end she had been dreading, perhaps, most of all. How could she carry on without Melbourne at her elbow?

But it seemed she would have to try. Wellington drily suggested that she had better wipe away her tears, and send for Sir Robert Peel. He suggested also that all this worry about Melbourne was unnecessary—there were as good fish in the Parliamentary sea as ever came out of it.

The Queen did not agree. To her Melbourne stood alone. He was her prop and her mainstay. Also she disliked Peel. He was coarse and rough (in her opinion)—and—the unforgivable sin—he was Melbourne's enemy.

Nevertheless she had to send for him, but did not do it with the best of grace. The meeting was awkward but passed off better than might be expected. The trouble came later, when Peel tried to persuade the Queen to get rid of all her ladies-in-waiting, and substitute for them

ladies in favour of the new Government. Victoria flatly refused. A deadlock followed; Victoria, with her stubborn mouth firmly set, out-faced both Sir Robert and even the Duke of Wellington himself!

Finally Sir Robert said that unless the Queen acceded to his wishes he could not form a Government. The Queen said, very well; and wrote to Lord Melbourne.

The result was that the old Whig Government met again, and, having decided, with much enthusiasm, that it was "impossible to abandon such a Queen and such a woman," they withdrew their resignation, and took the amazing step of writing to the Queen advising her to break off her negotiations with Sir Robert.

The whole affair was highly unconstitutional, but the Queen won, and Lord Melbourne took his place by her side once more. It was of this incident that Prince George wrote in his diary: ". . . I am unutterably sorry for this, and God alone knows what now will happen . . .!"

The only thing Victoria cared about was that she had her beloved Lord Melbourne with her still. But she soon had something else to care about!

The domestic warfare started by the affair of Lady Flora still raged. The Queen and her mother were at daggers drawn.

The Duke of Wellington, with real good-nature considering the cavalier treatment he had just received at the hands of the Queen, stepped into the breach. As a first move he persuaded Sir John Conroy to resign his post and disappear into the country. His next was to induce the Queen to write a kindly letter to her mother. He then talked "like a Dutch Uncle" to the Duchess, and coaxed or threatened her into a more amicable mood.

It was very hard lines on him that, just when he appeared to have succeeded in straightening out the

Royal tangle, the whole of his efforts were nullified by a tragic happening.

Lady Flora was ill—very ill. And now the physicians definitely diagnosed a dreadful and necessarily fatal internal complaint.

She was dying . . . !

The news roared forth like a cyclone. In the Court the Iron Duke's carefully erected edifice came crashing about his ears. Any hope of immediate reconciliation between the Queen and her mother was at an end—for the time being, at any rate. Outside public feeling against the Queen became renewed and intensified.

Resentment was openly displayed. Driving through the streets of London the once-popular young Queen was hissed and hooted. Appearing on her balcony at Buckingham Palace, the crowd shouted : “Mrs. Melbourne ! ” at her.<sup>1</sup>

Nor were such open displays of resentment confined to the proletariat. At Ascot, as she passed the Duchess of Montrose and Lady Sarah Ingestre, they quietly but deliberately hissed her !

Lady Flora died, but she died already avenged.

The whole scandal burst forth again like a bomb. Victoria was dismayed, not only by these public demonstrations of her unpopularity, but also by the state of affairs in the Palace, where the two parties were, it seemed, now hopelessly divided and at variance.

Melbourne was secretly surprised at her attitude. He had expected that she would be frightened—chastened at least. She appeared to be neither. She faced the situation boldly—which may or may not have been mere bravado.

Melbourne was too old a statesman, too skilled a

<sup>1</sup> Greville, June 24th and July 7th (unpublished). Also Crawford, 222.

diplomatist, not to have the knack of turning apparently adverse circumstances to good account.

He re-opened, more insistently, this time, the marriage question. It would not do for things to go on like this, he said. Goodness only knew where it would end.

There was one way, and one way only to regain her lost popularity—with the public, at any rate. A Royal marriage would make a lovely red-herring to draw across the trail. All the world loves a lover—and there were few things more popular with a nation than a Royal wedding.

Very wisely he mentioned no names, but, no doubt prompted by him or by Stockmar, or by both, King Leopold of the Belgians did. He mentioned the name of Albert of Saxe-Coburg, and reminded Victoria of the strain in which she had written of this handsome and eligible young man some years before. How she had begged her “dearest uncle” to take care of his health—“the health of one now so dear to me.”

But by this time it seemed, unfortunately, that this girlish adoration of her handsome cousin had cooled!

Writing of the Coburg brothers on the occasion of their first visit to England, she had said: “. . . Albert . . . is extremely handsome . . . he has a beautiful nose and a very sweet mouth with fine teeth. . . . They draw very well, *particularly Albert*. . . . They have both learned a great deal, and are very clever, naturally clever, *particularly Albert*. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

Now we come to a point which may contain some significance—which may even explain this cooling off of her girlish worship of Albert:

In August, 1837, she wrote in her Journal: “To-day is my dearest cousin Albert’s 18th birthday, and I pray

<sup>1</sup> *Traces inserted.*

Heaven to pour its choicest blessings on his beloved head."

This was just after that momentous meeting with Prince George, and *before they* had danced together.

And after that there appear in the Journal no further references to Albert's birthday until after the marriage!

Could it be that her intimacy, slight though it apparently was, with Prince George had caused this remarkable cooling in the ardour of her feelings for Albert?

In April she told Melbourne that "at present" her feelings were "entirely against marrying." But it is said that her tone lacked the old determination, and there seemed a suggestion of hope in the words "at present."

This hope was not unjustified.

The two Princes, Ernest and Albert, had been on a tour through Italy with Baron Stockmar, and Victoria knew that the next visit in their pre-arranged programme would be to England. She would be expected to make her choice. . . .

So she shrugged her shoulders, and prepared to soften the shock that decision would undoubtedly cause in certain quarters. To King Leopold she wrote:

" . . . First of all I wish to know if *Albert* is aware of the wish of his *Father* and *you* relative to *me* . . . ? I am anxious that you should acquaint Uncle Ernest, that if I should like Albert, that I can make *no final promise this year*, for, at the *very earliest*, any such event could not take place *till two or three years hence*. For, independent of my youth, and my *great* repugnance to changing my present position, there is *no anxiety* evinced in *this country* for such an event. . . ."

This last would seem to be a trifle mendacious, in view of what we know had been happening recently in England.

She goes on to say :

“ . . . I may like him (*Albert*) as a friend, and as a *cousin*, and as a *brother*, but not *more* ; and should this be the case (which is not likely), I am very anxious that it should be understood that I am *not* guilty of any breach of promise, for I *never gave any*. . . . I am rather nervous about the visit, for the subject I allude to is not an agreeable one to me. . . . I have now spoken openly to you, which I was very, *very* anxious to do. . . . ”<sup>1</sup>

This, when one comes to consider the character of the Queen at that period, was perhaps a rather *twittery* letter for her to have written. Reading between the lines it seems clear that she found herself rather on the horns of a dilemma. Despite her protestations to the contrary, one feels that she realized the necessity of an early marriage, and, although not altogether to her liking, was prepared to go through with it. But there seems to have been, at this time, a great uncertainty in her mind as to whether Prince Albert was *the* man. And if not—then who . . . ? One wonders what would have happened if Prince George had been in England at that particular time, instead of roaming, fancy-free, among the Ionian Islands . . . ?

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, I, 224.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE MARRIAGE OF QUEEN VICTORIA

WITH the arrival of the two Princes in this country it would seem that Victoria's ideas about marriage underwent a remarkably rapid change.

On the evening of October 10th, 1839, the Coburg brothers arrived at Windsor, rather the worse for wear. They had had a very rough crossing ; had both been very sick ; and had had their entire kit soaked through and through. They were certainly neither of them in a mood to regard either England or its Queen with any special degree of favour.

On Saturday the 12th, Victoria wrote to King Leopold as follows :

“ . . . The dear cousins arrived at half-past seven on Thursday, after a very bad and almost dangerous passage, but looking both very well, and much improved. Having no clothes they could not appear at dinner, but nevertheless *debuted* after dinner in their *négligé*. Ernest is grown quite handsome ; Albert's *beauty* is *most striking*, and he so amiable and unaffected—in short, very *fascinating* ; he is excessively admired here. . . . We rode out yesterday, and danced after dinner. The young men are very amiable, delightful companions, and I am very happy to have them here. . . . ”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, I, 237.

And then, on the 15th—only three days after the letter quoted above and five days after the arrival of Albert and his brother—she writes :

“ MY DEAREST UNCLE :

“ This letter will, I am sure, give you great pleasure. . . . My mind is quite made up, and I told Albert this morning of it ; the warm affection he showed me on learning this gave me great pleasure. . . . He seems *perfection*, and I think I have the prospect of very great happiness before me. I *love* him *more* than I can say. . . . I am so much bewildered by it all that I know hardly how to write ; but I do feel *very, very* happy. It is absolutely necessary that this determination of mine should be known to *no one* but yourself and Uncle Ernest—till the meeting of Parliament—as it would be considered otherwise neglectful on my part not to have assembled Parliament at once to have informed them of it. . . . Lord Melbourne quite approved my choice, and expresses great satisfaction at the event. . . . We also think it better, and Albert quite approves of it, that we should be married very soon after Parliament meets, about the beginning of February ; and indeed, loving Albert as I do, I cannot wish it should be delayed. My feelings are a *little* changed I must say, since last Spring, when I said I couldn’t think of marrying for *three or four years* ; but seeing Albert has changed all this. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

Certainly a very remarkable *volte face*, which can only be attributed to it being a case of love at first sight—or, in view of what the Queen had written about him on the occasion of his previous visit, perhaps it would be more correct to describe it as love at *second* sight.

On November 23rd, 1839, a special meeting of the

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, I, 238.

Privy Council was held, at which the Queen read the Declaration of her approaching marriage. The Queen notes in her Journal :

" I went in ; the room was full, but I hardly knew who was there. Lord M. I saw, looking at me with tears in his eyes, but he was not near me. I then read my short Declaration. I felt my hands shook, but I did not make one mistake. I felt more happy and thankful when it was over."

In a letter to Prince Albert she says :

" . . . the Council was held at two o'clock ; more than a hundred persons were present, and *there* I had to read the Declaration. Everybody, they tell me, is very much pleased, and I wish you could have seen the crowds who cheered me loudly as I left the Palace for Windsor. . . ." <sup>1</sup>

It will thus be seen that Lord Melbourne was quite right, and that the sweet flavour of an approaching marriage removed from the tongue of the public the nasty taste left by the Hastings affair and the obstruction to Sir Robert Peel in his attempt to form a new ministry.

But the regained popularity of the Queen evidently did not extend to her Ministers, for in a letter from J. W. Croker, to Lady Hardwicke, dated November 24th, 1839, we find the following :

" . . . She (the *Queen*) then unfolded the paper and read her Declaration. . . . I cannot describe to you with what mixture of self-possession and feminine delicacy she read the paper . . . and she certainly *did* look as interesting and as handsome as any young lady as I ever saw. I happened to stand behind the Duke of Wellington. . . . The crowd which was not great but very decent, I might

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, I, 248.

almost say respectable, expressed their approbation of the Duke of Wellington and Sir R. Peel, *and their disapprobation of the Ministers very loudly. Lord John and Lord Normanby, they tell me, were positively hooted.* . . .<sup>1</sup>

However eager were the population to follow the redherring of a Royal marriage, this did not apply to the Court, where the old wars, both family and political, were carried on with unabated fury and vindictiveness.

In view of after events the following unpublished extract from Greville's Memoirs is of significance. It is dated November 13th, 1839, and Greville writes :

“. . . I had much talk with Lady Cowper about the Court. She lamented the obstinate character of the Queen, from which she thought that *hereafter great evils might be apprehended*. She said that her (*Victoria's*) prejudices and antipathies were deep and strong, and her disposition very inflexible. Her hatred of Peel and her resentment against the Duke for having sided with him rather than with her in the old quarrel are unabated.”<sup>2</sup>

Before long Victoria had a demonstration of the fact that she could not expect to ride roughshod over the Tory Party without reprisals—that they were not prepared to take her attitude lying down. She desired that her husband's rank should be definitely fixed by statute. But the Tories opposed it, and won the day. It was her idea that her husband should have the sum of £50,000 a year from the nation—but again the Tory Party stepped in, and all he got was £30,000—which, it was carefully pointed out, was the exact total of the whole revenue of Coburg !

The Queen took this bitterly to heart, and asserted that

<sup>1</sup> Croker Papers, II, 359. Italics inserted.

<sup>2</sup> Strachey, 106. Italics inserted.

she would not ask a single Tory to her wedding. Her hatred for the Duke of Wellington became yet greater, and she took little pains to conceal it.

We have it on the very best authority that, as the Queen's wedding day drew nearer and nearer, so her irritability increased, and her temper grew shorter and more violent. She became sharper and more arrogant in her manner than she had ever been before, and she was less easy to please in every way.

She was annoyed with Queen Adelaide. And her hitherto beloved uncle, King Leopold, also could do no right. She even spoke slightly of him to Albert—a thing she would have hardly done in any circumstances a year previously.

"Dear uncle," she said, "is given to believe that he must rule the roost everywhere. However, that is not a necessity!"<sup>1</sup>

There was even a display of acerbity in regard to Albert himself, in the matter of his secretary and personal attendants!

Now, when one remembers what Victoria had said at the beginning of her engagement, this seems to be rather strange conduct on her part. Can it possibly be regarded as the normal conduct of a young lady about to marry a man so passionately and devotedly loved as, according to her own accounts in letters and elsewhere, she loved Albert?

As the day grew nearer, so she grew worse. She became increasingly the victim of bad temper and frayed nerves. She even showed symptoms of fever and Sir James Clark's services were requisitioned. He *diagnosed* measles!

But once more, as in the dreadful case of Lady Flora

<sup>1</sup> Strachey, 107.

Hastings, Sir James was wrong. No measles developed—but the symptoms did not decrease.

It was evident that her trouble was mental rather than physical. And what could have been the cause of it?

It has been suggested that her agitation was due to last-moment regrets for the loss of her liberty—the embarking upon the dangerous experiment of marriage. This may be so, but it is not usual for a girl *in love* to worry overmuch about either loss of liberty, or the danger of the marriage experiment, and it would certainly seem to the impartial mind that the symptoms were far more indicative of regrets of another nature—that her conduct was rather that of one who fears she has made a mistake, not in consenting to share her life, but in the person with whom she has decided to share it!

Now let us see how Prince George was occupying himself during these eventful months.

In the November of 1839 H.R.H. returned from his Continental tour and joined his family at Kew. The weeks that followed seem to have been spent in the quietest possible manner. His Diary at this period mentions such placid amusements as drives with his mother and his Aunt Augusta in their pony-chaise, of games of lotto in the evenings, of quiet dinners and family conversations.

One high spot of this period is what seems to be the Prince's first experience of that then comparatively new and not over-popular form of locomotion, the railway.

In those early days of the "iron-horse" (as it was familiarly called) no person of gentility or note would have dreamed of travelling in "public carriages." Their own travelling carriages were driven to the station, and there placed upon a flat truck, which was afterwards coupled on to the train by which they wished to travel.



WILLIAM IV  
SECOND VISCOUS EARL OF MILFORD HAN  
From the painting by John Phillip, R.A.



THE EARL OF MILFORD  
From the painting by L. Dingle after Sir J. E. Millais



This method seems to have been adopted in the case of the Prince's first railway journey, for he writes in his Diary that he breakfasted at seven, and at seven-thirty set out for Euston Square "to go with the railroad to Rugby." He goes on to say that he travelled with his father in his carriage, while the servants and luggage occupied his own. The Prince notes that the journey was "not at all disagreeable," and seems impressed by the fact that the party reached Rugby a little after twelve o'clock.

The Prince's Diary of December, 1839, contains two interesting notes. The first is that the news of the Queen's marriage, just broken to him, was very gratifying ("Nothing could have given me greater pleasure than this intelligence").

Three days later, on the 18th, he says :

"The Queen having settled to see me at Windsor to-day, Papa, Mama, and Augusta determined to accompany me . . ."

It is notable that, whereas, since her accession, H.R.H.'s visits to the Queen had been more or less *à deux*—entirely so, as far as his own family were concerned—this particular visit, his first since his departure for Gibraltar, should assume the proportions of a family visitation! And the word "determined" is used rather than "*decided*" or "*agreed*."

He goes on to say that the family party left Kew at eleven o'clock, and arrived at Windsor at one. "We were received as usual, and taken into the Green Drawing-Room, where the Queen received me most kindly. I think she is looking well. We offered our congratulations on the approaching marriage, and they all talked a good deal about it."

The two operative words in this paragraph would appear to be "*me*" and "*they*," and the use of them is certainly peculiar.

"... received *ME* *most kindly*"—not "*us*." Can it be that Her Majesty did not receive the rest of the party so cordially? That, in fact, she was inclined to resent their presence on this occasion?

And again, in regard to the discussion of the approaching nuptials—"... *they* talked a good deal about it." Surely "*we talked... etc.*" would have been the natural way to note it, and it would seem to suggest that he himself was disinclined, for some reason, to take any active part in the discussion.

Altogether one feels that, for the two principal parties concerned, this meeting cannot have been very happy or comfortable. The shadow of embarrassment which must have hung over it seems to have been strong enough to even transfer itself, though very reservedly, to the Prince's Diary.

Victoria makes one or two references to this visit in her correspondence. She writes to Lord Melbourne as follows :

"The Queen writes just two lines to send Lord Melbourne the accompanying civil letter from the Queen Dowager, and to give him an account of the visit of the Cambridges. They were all very kind and civil, George grown but not embellished and *much less reserved with the Queen and evidently happy to be CLEAR of me.* He gave but an indifferent account of the King of Greece, but a favourable one of the Queen. The Duchess said she had expected the Queen would marry Albert, and was not surprised at the event. *They were very discreet, and asked no questions.*"

To King Leopold she writes, the following day :

“ . . . All the Royal Family answered very kindly and civilly (*the news of the engagement*), the Duchess of Cambridge and Augusta with the Duke and George came over on purpose yesterday to congratulate me.”

And the Queen wrote a letter to Albert which contains a very significant statement indeed :

“ . . . I saw to-day the Duke of Cambridge who has shown me your letter, with which he is delighted—and indeed it is a very nice one. The Duke told Lord Melbourne *he had always greatly desired our marriage and never thought of George; but that I do not believe. . . .*”

The next entry in H.R.H.’s Diary of any interest deals with an entirely different subject. It is under the date of January 19th, 1840, and sets forth that he had just paid his first visit to White’s Club : “ . . . They have elected me a member and I went into the room there for the first time and saw a great many of my friends. I am exceedingly glad that I belong to this Club, as it is a very good one, and a great many of my friends belong to it, and it is a place to which I can always go and where I can dine if I like.”

This entry shows very clearly that, although now in his twenty-first year, the Prince was still very much a boy.

Apparently Victoria and George did not meet again, except perhaps on public or semi-public occasions, until shortly before the date of the Royal Wedding. At any rate there is no mention of any such meeting in the Diaries, and the Prince’s next reference, under the date of February 15th (five days after the wedding), is to Prince Albert, of whom he says : “ The Duke of Cobourg came

over with his two sons. Prince Albert is very good-looking and appears a very nice person in every respect."

It is notable that the Prince does not make any reference in his Diary or elsewhere to his meeting with Victoria, which must have been the last one prior to the wedding, on January 12th. The Queen, however, mentions it in a letter to Prince Albert under that date :

"... I had to-day a visit from George whom I received *alone*, and he was very courteous. His Papa I have also seen."

There seems to be a suggestion of *restraint* in this mention, and the word "*alone*" is stressed. It might refer to that former meeting, when the family descended upon her *en masse* as it were—it would almost seem to suggest that she insisted on the *tête-à-tête*. It is also a little curious that she should mention that he was "*very courteous*," for surely, in the circumstances, he could hardly have been *less*.

Those weeks immediately preceding the wedding were not comfortable for those connected with the Court.

On January 21st, the Queen writes to Prince Albert :

"... We are all of us very much preoccupied with politics. The Tories really are very astonishing ; as they cannot and dare not attack us in Parliament they do everything that they can to be personally rude to me. ... The Whigs are the only safe and loyal people, and the Radicals will also rally round their Queen to protect her from the Tories ; but it is a curious sight to see those, who as Tories, used to pique themselves upon their excessive loyalty, doing everything to degrade their young Sovereign in the eyes of the people. Of course there are exceptions. . . ."

This communication is of great interest in that the note of peevish complaint shows clearly how frayed were the nerves of the "young Sovereign" at this time.

Another passage of considerable significance is contained in a letter to Albert under the date of January 31st:

"... You have written me in one of your letters about our stay at Windsor (*the honeymoon*), but, dear Albert, you have not at all understood. You forget, my dearest Love, that I am the Sovereign, and *that business can stop and wait for nothing*. Parliament is sitting, and something occurs almost every day, for which I may be required, and it is quite impossible for me to be absent from London; *therefore two or three days is already a long time to be absent*. I am never easy a moment, if I am not on the spot and see and hear what is going on, and everybody, including all my Aunts (who are very knowing in all these things) says I must come out after the second day, for, as I must be surrounded by my Court, I cannot keep alone. This *is also my own wish in every way*..."<sup>1</sup>

This, it must be admitted, is hardly the letter of the passionately eager bride she was supposed to be. For Albert it should have been something in the nature of a shadow of things to come. Perhaps it was.

But whatever may have been the feelings, the fears, or the regrets of those most intimately concerned, time and tide wait for no one, and the Great Day eventually arrived.

Even on this day of days, Victoria, that indefatigable correspondent, could not refrain from writing at least one letter. It was to Albert:

" MY DEAREST,

" 10th February, 1840.

" How are you to-day, and have you slept well? I have rested very well, and feel very comfortable to-day.

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, I, 269. Italics inserted.

What weather ! I believe, however, the rain will cease. Send one word when you, my most dearly loved bridegroom, are ready. Thy ever faithful,

“ VICTORIA R.”

An official account of the wedding reads :

“ The marriage of the Queen and Prince Albert took place amid great splendour and general rejoicings on February 10th ; the general satisfaction being unaffected by the tactless conduct of Ministers who, by not acting in conjunction with the Opposition, had been defeated on the question of the amount of the Prince’s annuity, the House of Commons reducing it from £50,000 to £30,000.”

Prince George notes it as follows in his Diary :

“ *February 15th* : The Queen’s marriage on February 10th went off well. . . . The Queen was married in the Chapel Royal at 12 in the day, and we all attended in State, and walked in procession from the State Apartments to the Church. After the ceremony there was a great breakfast at Buckingham Palace to which we went, and then the young couple went to Windsor, where they were to stay till yesterday, and then return to town. We, the family, went to dine with the Queen Dowager and afterwards I walked out for a short time to see the illuminations, which was exceedingly good fun, there being an immense crowd of people in the streets ! I concluded this long day by going to a full dress party at the Duchess of Sutherland’s, which was a very handsome thing altogether.”

It will be noted that here, as in the case of the Coronation, H.R.H. seems to have been more impressed by the surroundings than by the principal protagonists. In this

case he *says not one word about the appearance or demeanour of the Queen!*

A contemporary correspondent mentions in one of his letters :

“ At the Duchess of Sutherland’s party that night . . . I saw also Prince George of Cambridge, who seemed for such a rather grave and serious young man to be in the very highest of spirits. . . .”

## CHAPTER XVI

1840

**W**E have it on the best authority that, whatever doubts, fears or regrets may have affected Victoria before the return of the Prince Consort for the wedding, they did not survive that return.

As Strachey picturesquely puts it in his *Queen Victoria* : “ . . . He reappeared, in exquisite uniform, and her hesitations melted in his presence like mist before the sun.”

And one notes an immediate change in the tone of her correspondence which tends to confirm this. Gone is the peevish, querulous or angry undertone ! Instead we have letters like this one—written to King Leopold from Windsor Castle on the day following the wedding—February 11th, 1840 :

“ MY DEAREST UNCLE,

“ I write you from here, the happiest, happiest Being that ever existed. Really I do not think it *possible* for anyone in the world to be *happier* or as happy as I am. He is an Angel, and his kindness and affection for me is really touching. To look in those dear eyes, and that dear sunny face is enough to make me adore him. What I can do to make him happy will be my greatest delight. . . . I was a good deal tired last night, but am quite well again to-day, and happy. My love to dear Louise.

“ Ever your affectionate,

VICTORIA R.”

Even in the beginning, however, she could not make him happy by giving him the sort of honeymoon for which he would have wished. They spent but a day or two at Windsor, and even then they were not entirely alone. They had to be accompanied by their respective suites, with Lehzen and Stockmar well in the foreground.

Then they returned to London, and to affairs of State—and poor Albert found himself in what he must have felt to be a very invidious position. So far as State affairs were concerned, he was little more than a ghost—or, at the utmost, a shadow.

A Queen's husband was something more even than a *rara avis* to the Court—it was an Unprecedented Occurrence. And as all the world knows, the Englishman is one of the most conservative of mortals, and an Unprecedented Occurrence is as an anathema to him.

In affairs of State a shadow—and a rather chilling shadow at that—Albert found himself also little more than a cipher in his own house. He controlled nothing. On the contrary, he was supervised. Not merely by his wife, which he might have been content to endure, but by the ubiquitous Baroness Lehzen, who now acted not only as superintendent of the Royal Household, but also controlled the office of Keeper of the Privy Purse.

The trouble was he had little to fall back on. He was a foreigner, shy, neither fond of the society of ladies nor in any way at his ease in it, self-opinionated, and reserved. So that the ordinary pleasures of the Court, in which he might have found some ease from what must for him have been an almost intolerable position, were denied him. One feels that he must, in those days, have been an exceedingly unhappy young man. He was forced to fall back on the only three people at the Court who,

apart of course from Victoria herself, probably had any real understanding of, or sympathy with, him.

These were Stockmar, Seymour, and Anson—but the former was more of a mentor than a friend, and the other two were his subordinates.

Even against his newly made wife he had complaints. He was undoubtedly her intellectual superior, and had also a greater experience of politics and statecraft.

But when he attempted to relieve the monotony of life by discussing politics with her, she first eluded him and changed the subject, and finally, when challenged by him on the point, flatly refused, saying that he was her recreation—when she was with him she was indisposed to spoil their time together by a discussion of those dull politics to which so much of her working day was given . . . !

This was an old excuse, made everywhere by husbands who did not feel disposed to discuss their business with their wives. Prince Albert was quick to realize this, and his humiliation was almost complete. Such a reversal of the normal positions of husband and wife would have humiliated any man in those days—how much more so must it have humiliated this proud and reserved Prince.

The highly dangerous situation was inflamed, if it had not been actually caused, by the familiar spirits of the young couple—the Baroness Lehzen on the one side, and the Baron Stockmar on the other. The latter was continually at the Prince's elbow, hinting, suggesting. . . . He now had a duty to the English people—was he not going to do it . . . ? And he had dignity—was he going to allow it to be sacrificed for the daughter of an obscure German pastor . . . ?

Poor Albert must have suffered greatly. He endeavoured to find alleviation by inviting distinguished

literary and scientific men to wait upon him, that he might hear their opinions and converse with them. But Victoria immediately put her foot down on the project. She had, she said, "no desire to encourage such people." It has been suggested that she took this attitude because she well knew that she was quite unable to hold her own in such company, but whether that is true or not, her veto stood.

The situation remained, thus wretched and strained, until in July, 1840, the Prince (it is said largely through the agency of Stockmar) scored a minor triumph. The prospect of a child being born to them resulted in the passing of a Regency Bill, appointing the Consort to act as Regent in the event of the Queen's death. This meant that he was at last recognized as someone at Court—something more than a mere shadow.

But more decisive was his step when, once more, the Whig Ministry collapsed. There was a General Election, and it became morally certain that the Tories would come into power. The old trouble of the Bedchamber was obviously likely to be revived. The Consort arranged a series of secret conferences with Sir Robert Peel, and a compromise was arrived at.

It was agreed that the constitutional point should not be raised, but that, should the Tories come into power, the principal ladies of the Whig party should retire, "of their own free will," and that then their places should be filled by others selected by Sir Robert Peel.

When Victoria learned of this, and being, no doubt, further influenced by the fact that she was about to lose the active support of Lord Melbourne, and so was likely to be left very lonely so far as matters of State were concerned, she was constrained to alter her attitude, and to turn to her husband for support and advice in all matters.

The Whig Ministry resigned in 1841. By the latter part of 1842 Albert had only to express a wish—a mere hint was usually sufficient—for Victoria to put it into practice.

It may have been due to an expressed wish of Albert's, or a mere hint, or even an almost telepathic knowledge of his desire, that at about this time the Baroness Lehzen retired somewhat suddenly from the Court, and went back to her native Hanover, in the neighbourhood of which she went into retirement in a small but comfortable house, the walls of which were almost covered by portraits of Victoria.

Now the bad days were over, and there seems to be little doubt but that Victoria reaped the full reward of her surrender, and that there entered into their lives a love which is superior to mere physical attraction.

Time moved on. Events came and went. A barman named Oxford made an attempt to shoot the Queen on Constitution Hill, but failed. He was captured, tried, found insane and sent to an asylum.

The situation in Afghanistan was unsettled. There were disputes with China, and actual hostilities eventually broke out. A naval force was sent out and Chusan was captured.

There were difficulties between England and France. Louis Napoleon, in the course of an attempt against the Government, was captured—and it was discovered that he had been landed in France from a British ship. Eastern affairs produced further complications between the two countries, so long hereditary enemies. For a time there was danger of a war, but eventually it passed away.

In Holland, William I, at the age of sixty-seven, abdicated in favour of his son, who took the throne as William II.

On November 9th, 1841, an heir to the British throne arrived, afterwards to become the Queen's successor as King Edward VII.

In China punitive operations were continued, and Canton was at the mercy of British arms.

In 1845 and '46 there were ministerial crises, in which the Prince Consort played a very important and dominating part. Thereafter it was generally recognised that to all intents and purposes, the once ignored and neglected Consort was now the King of England. Albert had come into his own !

Soon after this, Lord Melbourne, reduced at last to a state bordering on imbecility, and neglected by all his old friends (with the notable exception of Victoria, who was kind to him till the last), died.

The Royal Family increased. Inside eighteen months of the birth of the Prince of Wales came the Princess Alice. She was followed by Prince Alfred, then the Princess Helena, to be followed again by Louise. And it seemed clear that even more Royal progeny might be expected in due course.

And what of Prince George during this time ?

It is unfortunate that, for the years 1840 to '49, inclusive, his Diaries are mysteriously missing, and one is inclined to wonder whether there is any reason for this, for there certainly seems to have been a very wide-spread conspiracy of silence in regard to certain momentous events which occurred in the Prince's life at this period.

In December, 1839, H.R.H. was attached to the 12th Lancers, and, after joining the regiment in the spring of the following year, he remained with it for a period of two years, much of that time being spent in Ireland.

In the most comprehensive life of the Duke of Cambridge, published by Canon Edgar Sheppard, C.V.O., D.D.

(who was the father of that most popular divine, the late Canon "Dick" Sheppard), under the title of *George Duke of Cambridge: A Memoir of his Private Life*, and which is compiled mainly from H.R.H.'s Diaries and correspondence, a very curious and definite gap appears between the years of 1839 and '42.

Says the Author and Compiler, on page 79 of Volume I :

" Of the years that follow (1839) we have, unfortunately, no record from the pen of Prince George, for the Diaries from 1840 to 1849 are missing. This break in the continuity of the written word is much to be deplored, for of all the stirring events which crowded the opening years of Queen Victoria's reign the Prince was a keen and critical observer. . . . But if Diaries are absent, there is fortunately a considerable mass of correspondence which throws many sidelights on some at any rate of the leading features of the period, and serves to illustrate the growth of the Prince's character."

He then proceeds to quote some of these letters, but it is very significant, especially on top of the mysterious disappearance of the Diaries, that the first of these letters quoted is one from the Duke of Wellington, under the date of August 29th, 1842.

Thus it would seem that there are no letters in existence or available, either written or received by Prince George, between the dates of February, 1840, and August, 1842.

It was during the period so mysteriously bare of any sort of record written by the Prince that what can only be regarded as some of the most important events of his private life took place.

Luckily, however, there are other forms of contemporary evidence to be obtained, and the gist of them will be given in the ensuing chapters.

## CHAPTER XVII

### LOVE

**I**N the years 1839 and '40. the British stage was embellished by the presence upon it of a very charming and apparently talented young actress.

A number of critics and experienced actors did not hesitate to prophesy that she might, in time, become a second Mrs. Siddons—" If," as Charles Kean is reported to have said on one occasion, " that lovely face and divine figure, to say nothing of that inimitable charm of manner, does not cause her to commit the indiscretion of marrying some wealthy young fool who will insist on her giving up her profession and becoming a Society dame ! "

This was, in fact, what did happen, though one imagines that old Kean, when he made his prophecy, had little notion who the " wealthy young fool " (who was, in fact, anything but a fool !) would be.

The name of this beautiful and charming young lady is given alternately as " Fairbrother " and " Farebrother." The fact seems to be that the latter was her correct name, but that she slightly altered the spelling of it for professional purposes.

Edmund Yates, founder and editor of *The World*, has stated that she was the daughter of one of the partners in a firm of well-known printers of that period—Messrs. S. & G. Farebrother, of Bow Street, in the City of London.

We are told that Louisa Fairbrother (for the purposes of

this work we shall use her stage spelling of the name, by which she is most generally known) combined with her great personal charm and extraordinary tact a very strong will of her own, and an unassailable personal courage, even at a very early age. Thus, despite the horror of her parents at the very thought of her going on the stage (it was considered a *very* disreputable calling—not even a profession—in those days) she eventually had her way.

It is said that her mother, failing to reason with her successfully, called in the aid of her father, who was promptly and thoroughly beaten by his young daughter both in argument and action !

“ Stage people—play-actors and actresses,” said he, “ are lewd, wicked, and wanton people ! ”

“ Some of them are, no doubt,” was the reply. “ But then, so are some printers”—here she gave one or two instances—“ but I am sure that you, my dear Papa, are neither lewd, wicked, nor wanton. And why, therefore, should I be, if I happened to go upon the stage ? ”

“ The theatre,” asserted her angry father, “ is well known to be the devil’s ante-room ! ”

“ Why, Papa ? ” asked the daughter, gently.

“ Because many plays are bad, and incite people to wickedness ! ”

“ But so are many books, papers, and broadsheets. But that does not stop *you* being a printer ! ”

“ I do not—will not—print things that are bad ! ” retorted her father.

“ And therefore I, being your daughter, would not play in plays that are bad, or incite to badness ! ” was the calm rejoinder.

Finally the father, finding that he was hopelessly out-classed at this kind of things, changed his tactics. He

stormed, raved, and threatened—all of which left his determined daughter quite unmoved.

He finally adopted the time-honoured method of dealing with refractory and rebellious daughters. He had his daughter confined to her room until she should come to a more complaisant frame of mind. Her reply to this was to go on hunger-strike, and to refuse all food until she became ill.

And when her father, in fear for her health, relented and she was released from durance vile, she still kept up her hunger-strike with indomitable courage.

"For," said she, "if I cannot go upon the stage, I have no further interest in life, and therefore may as well die and get it over as soon as maybe!"

So the father, finding himself defeated on all sides, finally gave in, with great reluctance, and Louisa was permitted to fulfil her ambition, and become an actress. But her father never approved of it, and predicted "a bad end" for his rebellious and determined daughter. It may be because of this that she altered the spelling of her name, and became Louisa *Fairbrother*.

That she was a success during her comparatively brief stage-career there seems to be no manner of doubt. It is true that she does not seem to have played leading parts, but she had hardly arrived at that stage, for she was only twenty-four when fate singled her out to play a new and totally unexpected part as wife and mother—which, it may be said here and now, she played as she did her previous and more ephemeral roles—to perfection.

Writing in *The World*, on January 22nd, 1890, Edmund Yates mentions that he had a perfect recollection of Louisa Fairbrother on the stage :

"... of which she was an attractive ornament. During the Keeley management of the Lyceum she was

the reigning beauty, and her splendid appearance as Abdallah in the *Forty Thieves* was well reproduced by J. W. Childe, of Bedford Street, Covent Garden, the theatrical portrait aquarelist in those ante-photographic days. Lithographed examples of this drawing are still extant among collectors . . . in private life a lady of great personal charm—amiable, domestic, appreciative, and an excellent talker. . . .”

Another contemporary description, apparently from the pen of George Vandenhoff, the author of *Leaves from an Actor's Notebook*, published in England and America in 1860, says :

“ . . . Attached to the Covent Garden Company of that day (1840) was a fair lady who figured annually in the Christmas Pantomimes as Columbine. Miss F— much admired for the classic contour of her face and the elegance of her form. . . .”

And in the *Era* of January 18th, 1890, the following appears :

“ . . . a Miss Farebrother, and in her early days was known as an accomplished actress. She appeared at the Lyceum Theatre . . . under the Mathews-Vestrie management in the character of Transimenus, an Arcadian Prince, in Planché's extravaganza, *The Golden Branch*, and her refined style and graceful and finished dancing captivated both critics and public. She was considered the most lovely woman of her time. . . .”

At this time Prince George of Cambridge was a very generous and (at times) impulsive young man of twenty. From his Diaries he is clearly proved to be a deep and serious thinker, a purist, and a young man with the highest ideals. Also he was not one to be driven in any



MISS LOUISA FAIRBROTHER AS "LITTLE JOHN" IN THE *ROBIN HOOD* PRODUCTION AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, LYCEUM



direction in which he did not want to go, and similarly difficult to restrain from any action which he wished to perform, and which the high standards he invariably set himself did not make him feel to be wrong.

On the subject of marriage he has expressed himself several times with considerable clarity. He felt it a sin against God, against man, and in particular against the woman concerned, to marry for any reason other than the dictates of his own heart. With courage and determination he followed these dictates.

Victoria, being now happily married herself, became an eager match-maker. One conceives she felt that Fate having decided that she should not marry Prince George herself, it was her plain duty to see about finding a suitable wife for him as soon as possible. Prince George himself may or may not have been aware of this, but whether or no, it seems to have made no difference to his actions.

One historic night His Royal Highness, alone and *incognito*, visited the Lyceum Theatre. So that he should not be recognised he sat in one of the more obscure parts of the house.

And then it was that he saw Louisa Fairbrother dance! Graceful, beautiful, charming, there seems to be little doubt but that she danced her way straight into his heart. One can feel that, almost in a daze, he watched her entrances and her exits, and that when she made her final bow, the show suddenly lost all interest for him.

Thereafter one can visualize him walking through the London streets, shabby and smoky, which to him might well have been the golden streets of Paradise itself, for all that he was conscious of them. Another young man had seen the "only woman in the world."

Prince George was very young, and very *ingénue*. One

can see him going to the Lyceum show, night after night, sitting in his obscure seat and watching the figure of his divinity dance, light and airy, before him on the stage.

And then, at last, comes the moment when he feels that he must meet his dream lady. With fast-beating heart he makes for the stage-door after the performance, and, handing in to the door-keeper a gigantic bouquet of flowers, sends his name—a name—up to the lady in her dressing-room.

“A gentleman by the name of Mr. Cambridge, Miss, sends these 'ere flowers with his most respectful compliments, and humbly craves that you will grant him an interview . . . !”

She takes the flowers, looks at them with admiration, and then, as she lays them down on her dressing-table, answers coldly :

“ You will please to tell the gentleman that I thank him for his flowers, but regret that I cannot receive persons to whom I have not been properly introduced ! ”

The answer is duly delivered, and the frustrated Prince goes away. How mingled must his feelings have been on that occasion ! The reputation of actresses a century ago was far from high—they were supposed to be the easiest prey to any young rake-hell who had a few sovereigns to spend on his—and their—amusement. How reluctant must this idealistic young man have been to take the risk of finding that his beautiful idol had, after all, but feet of clay—and yet how the lure of her beauty forced him to take the step which might well end in such disillusion.

But it had not—and so, mingled with his disappointment at not being able, at that very moment, to meet her, to speak to her, and to hear her speak, was the triumph of knowing that she was not just an ordinary play-

actress, easy game for any personable young man with a little money to spend.

H.R.H. was not the sort of young man to leave the matter as it stood. If it was merely an introduction that was needed, it should, after all, be easy. He did not propose to use any of his friends for the purpose. He was too much in earnest for that.

A visit to the back of the stage, his card sent in to the manager, was enough to secure what he needed.

His Royal Highness Prince George of Cambridge desired an introduction to Miss Louisa Fairbrother, the dancer! Why, what could be easier—and what an honour for his theatre . . . ! He may have had a quiet smile to himself, judging the Prince by other young noblemen who desired introductions to his actresses (though usually such formalities were entirely unnecessary) and knowing what he doubtless regarded as the silly prudery of Miss Fairbrother. However, that was none of his business, and the theatrical manager of those days knew only too well how to look after his own business!

If all went well, he could see the Prince filling a box night after night with his boon companions, in order that they might gaze their fill on the lady who had captured his affections—for the moment. And if things went not well—then there was no great damage done—only that little fool Fairbrother would have to be severely talked to . . . !

It was, perhaps, as well that the Prince could not read the thoughts of the manager . . . !

The introduction was duly, and rapidly, effected—and with all the formality that even Miss Fairbrother could desire.

Mr. Cambridge meets Miss Fairbrother.

"Mr. Cambridge! Why—why it was you . . ."

"Who ventured to send you up a few poor flowers the other night. Yes, but I am afraid they were a very inadequate token of the admiration I feel for your wonderful dancing."

"I fear you may have thought me churlish—ungrateful."

"Not another word, if you please, Miss Fairbrother. I—I assure you that I quite understood. And—I was glad."

"Ah, then you *did* understand . . .!"

Unfortunately there are no details of the courtship, but that it was a genuine case of love at first sight, on both sides, there seems to be little doubt. Still less that it was not, as such love so often is, merely a transitory, ephemeral passion that caught the two young people in its folds.

At first, and for some time after, she had no notion of his real identity. But deceit of any kind was so utterly foreign to the Prince's nature that it was not long before he had to tell her.

But before he did so he put his fate to the test—told her he loved her, and asked her if she would consent to marry him. One feels that there was no doubt in her answer—little hesitation in her surrender.

"Before we go any further, my dear one, I must tell you the truth about myself. I am not precisely who and what I seem to be!"

And her brave response :

"I do not care who or what you are! You may be a beggar—or the worst criminal in this great city! You are still the man I love—and to me that is all that matters."

One imagines that the shock she got was far worse for her than had it been as she had suggested. A Prince of the Blood Royal . . . ! And she, an obscure little dancer,

and the daughter of a city printer . . . ! Though one feels that she must have smiled a little at the thought of that "bad end" which her father had predicted for her when she had insisted on going on the stage !

It all seemed very easy, as George explained it to her. He would, of course, have to obtain the Sovereign's consent to their marriage, but that should not be difficult. Queen Victoria was his cousin and had always been very kindly disposed towards him. No doubt she would give her consent readily enough—how could she help doing so, once she had seen his bride-to-be?—and then she would, naturally, confer a title upon her, and—well, that would be *that*.

Alas for the optimism of all young lovers. . . !

## CHAPTER XVIII

### MARRIAGE

**I**T was not long before Prince George discovered that things were not going to be as easy as he had imagined —by any means.

It has to be remembered that, so far as the ways of women were concerned, H.R.H. was very ignorant. Like most idyllic-minded young men of his time (and almost any time) he regarded women as creatures with more than a touch of divinity in them ; superior to men in every way ; kind, generous, forgiving—all tenderness and sympathy where love and lovers were concerned.

He had his reasons for supposing that Victoria would look upon his proposed marriage with approval. She had lately shown some anxiety that he should find a wife for himself, and had hinted as much to him. They were cousins, and blood is thicker than water. She had always been well-disposed towards him—had always seemed to have his interests at heart. And was there not, below the surface though it might be, a sentimental link between them . . . ? Had they not come very near to marrying each other ? True, it was he who had drawn back, but he had done it very gently, and now she must be blessing him for it, in that it might be said, in a sense, that he had thrown her into the arms of Albert, where she was so superlatively happy.

Thus, in his blessed innocence of the dark, labyrinthine

workings of a woman's mind, did he sum up the situation—and the old tag about Hell having no fury like a woman scorned, if he had ever heard it, he probably regarded as a piece of cheap cynicism.

He knew that, in accordance with the Royal Marriage Act, he would have to obtain the Sovereign's official consent to the union, as well as her private approval of it. He had not the slightest fear of any difficulty in obtaining either.

He was due for a grievous shock and it is difficult to imagine what his feelings must have been when he discovered the Queen's real attitude.

It is said that she gave him the opening to break the news herself, by suggesting that he should consider one of the many German princesses as a possible bride.

Some instinct seems to have warned him to break the news as gently as possible :

" Why, Cousin, I quite agree that it is time I thought about marrying, and I must say that seeing how happy you are causes me to feel almost eager to try the experiment myself ! "

It was a good opening—the reference to her own happiness pleased the Queen.

" I am glad to hear you speak like that, dear George. And now, let us put our heads together on the matter. Which of these German princesses do you feel the greatest preference for ? "

" Why, none of 'em, Cousin ! " replied the Prince, bluntly. " If you must have the truth, I do not like the Germans at all ! I cannot stand their bombast, their arrogance, their conceit of themselves ! Furthermore, I have a feeling that they are not, at heart, friendly either to this country or to the Throne, and that one day—

though that may not be yet awhile—they will make us painfully aware of this fact ! ”<sup>1</sup>

“ Oh, surely, dear George, that is a little harsh, is it not ? ”

“ Harsh or not, Cousin, it is my firm belief. No, no German princesses for me, if you please ! Not if they were the last women in the world.”

“ Well,” observed the Queen. “ I’m sorry to hear you say that, George. But still——” with a touch of archness, “—I feel sure that you have someone in your mind’s eye ? ”

One conceives that he may have blushed a little at this juncture.

“ Why, yes, I have. You are quite right.”

“ Ah ! I thought as much ! Now, who can it be, I wonder ? I trust she is a princess of the Blood . . . ? ”

A faint suspicion in her mind that he was thinking of contracting a *mésalliance*—and she would have regarded marriage with one of the young noblewomen of the Court as a *mésalliance* . . . !

He may have sensed dawning antagonism in her manner, and his reply would have been a trifle nervous : “ Why, no, Cousin—not of the Blood Royal. Nor, for that matter, a princess . . . ! ”

“ Hah ! ” Victoria’s voice is sharp now. “ One of our pretty Society girls, I suppose ? ”

“ Well,” a trifle hesitatingly, now. “ No, she is not exactly that, either ! ”

“ Then whoever is she, George ? Tell me, at once ! ”

“ Why, as a matter of fact, Cousin, she is a Miss Louisa Fairbrother . . . ! ”

<sup>1</sup> “ . . . He [George, Duke of Cambridge] always distrusted and disliked the Germans, declining right up to the day of his death in 1904 to accept them at their own valuation. He early predicted the ex-Kaiser’s future. . . . ” Kingston, *Famous Morganatic Marriages*.

"Louisa Fairbrother. . . . *Louisa Fairbrother* . . . ! Why, I don't think I know her, do I ? "

"No, Cousin, I don't think so. But she is a most beautiful, a divine—creature. I am sure you will love her just as soon as you set eyes on her . . . ! "

"Perhaps ! But who is she ? To what family does she belong . . . ? "

"Well, as a matter of fact her father is a printer—a very big printer—in the City. And she is an actress ! "

"A . . . WHAT . . . ? "

"An actress—but a very beautiful and most accomplished one . . . ! "

He is staring, fascinated now, at Victoria's face. She has gone very pale, and there is a hard, angry light in her eyes :

"George ! Are you mad . . . ? You are a Prince of the Blood Royal. . . . You are so near to my throne ! And you think—you actually dare to even *think*—of marrying a low, common actress . . . ! If this is a joke, I can assure you we do not find it to our taste . . . ! "

But now George is also roused. He too is flushed and his eyes are shining :

"It is no joke, M'am ! And Miss Fairbrother may be an actress, but she is neither low nor common . . . ! "

"Bah ! All actresses are low and common, and besides . . . ! "

But he faced her defiantly, and actually dared to interrupt her.

"Nevertheless, I love her, and I mean to marry her, M'am ! "

"Are you aware that you first have to obtain my permission ? "

"I am asking for it now, M'am ! "

"You shall never have it ! I wonder that you dare to ask me such a thing ! "

"I see nothing to *dare*, M'arn ! It is true I am a Prince, but I am also a *man* ! And I hold that the man who does not marry where he loves, and *because* he loves, and for no other reason, betrays his manhood and insults his God . . . !"

Hardly, perhaps, a tactful remark, in view of the still recent Royal marriage. But now he pulls himself together, and proceeds more gently and warily :

"I most humbly beg you to grant your permission to this marriage. After all, it will not be difficult to confer a title upon Miss Fairbrother . . . !"

"Never ! The whole thing is ridiculous—you *must* be mad. An *actress* . . . !"

She said the word as though she were speaking of some foul reptile, but he still managed to keep his temper, and to continue to plead with her :

"You will see how mistaken you are, if only you will consent to give her an audience. You will change your mind about her in five minutes," he said, with boyish emotion. "Don't be unjust. Only receive her, and if after that you still think her impossible, I will reconsider my decision ; but I am confident that Louisa will gain your love and your sympathy !"<sup>1</sup>

But the Queen refused. She would not receive Miss Fairbrother. She would not consent to the marriage. She now let loose all the vials of her wrath. She stamped and raved, much as the small girl used to stamp and rave in the old nursery at Kensington Palace. But all this had little effect on the Prince, except to cause him to lose his temper as well. And when she had exhausted most of her scorn and invective, and, becoming a little more reasonable, had tried to reason with him, and pointed out that even if she had heirs, and he never came to the

<sup>1</sup> This speech is quoted by Kingston in *Famous Morganatic Marriages*.

Throne, she would still require his support for at least twenty years in many State functions, and how "that woman" would always be in the way, he replied, bluntly :

" You will always have my support, when you call for it and need it. But though you are my Queen, you are not my God, nor the keeper of my conscience. With or without your permission, I intend to marry Louisa ! "

Here was defiance indeed ! Such defiance as the arrogant, domineering young Queen had never before encountered, and it infuriated her to the very last degree.

She absolutely and finally refused her consent to the marriage, and not only would not receive Louisa Fair-brother before her marriage, or Mrs. FitzGeorge after it, for very many years, but would not even permit her name to be mentioned in her presence !

One must be just to Victoria, so far as possible, in this matter.

First, it must be remembered that these things were viewed in general far less broadly then than they are to-day. Secondly, Victoria's ridiculous upbringing at the hands of Lehzen and her mother had made her narrow-minded and prudish, even for those times. It had also made her arrogant and self-willed, and with an inflated idea of her own prerogative and the importance of Royal blood.

To this one must add that she probably had very bitter memories of William IV's Mrs. Jordan, and the ten Royal bastards she had been compelled to accept at Windsor Castle when she first went there as Queen. She probably foresaw, and shuddered at, repetitions of those, to her, extremely painful scenes in the future.

But one is compelled to feel that there was something more even than all this behind her arrogant and

completely unreasonable attitude, and it seems it can only have been sheer, completely feminine, jealousy !

*She* had once thought of marrying Prince George herself ! She had been ready and willing to share her Throne with him. But he had not shown a similar willingness, and had seemed glad enough that she should go to Albert (" *George is evidently happy to be free of me* "). She had been quite ready to forgive all that, had H.R.H. been willing to marry some dumb German princess of her own choosing, so that she would have felt that it was *she* who had made the match, and who had voluntarily relinquished that sense of possession which every jealous woman has in regard to a man whom she has been near to marrying.

But that he should have deliberately chosen for himself, without consulting her—and, infinitely worse, that he should have preferred a common actress off the stage was too much. It was a not over-subtle insult to herself !

That, no doubt, was how she looked at it, and that, it would seem, is the only way by which her conduct in regard to this marriage can be explained.

*Truth*, of January 16th, 1890, in an article on the death of Mrs. FitzGeorge comments on the situation :

" Mrs. FitzGeorge was a lady of the highest character and of great amiability. She was married to the Duke of Cambridge, but, owing to the Royal Marriage Act, which required a member of the Royal Family to obtain the Sovereign's consent, the marriage was not recognized. She leaves three sons and one daughter who as regards their father are in the position of the Battenbergs and the Duke of Teck towards their respective progenitors. Why the Queen should never have assented to the marriage has been always a mystery, for the Duke of Cambridge had precisely the same right to marry Miss

Farebrother as the Princess Louise to marry Lord Lorne ; the Princess Louise of Wales to marry the Duke of Fife ; Princess Beatrice to marry Prince Henry of Battenburg and Princess Mary of Cambridge to marry the Duke of Teck, none of their eminent husbands being of Royal birth."

In view of this it is difficult not to believe that in adopting the attitude she did towards the marriage of Prince George, Queen Victoria was actuated mainly by personal motives.

But there it was. She adopted it, and she maintained it. She not only refused to give her consent to the marriage, she actually forbade it. And Prince George defied her !

One can understand that George felt a little shame-faced when he had to meet his sweetheart and tell her of the scene at Buckingham Palace, and of the Queen's opposition to the marriage. No doubt he smoothed it over a good deal, and refrained from quoting Victoria's comments on actresses in general, and Miss Fairbrother in particular. But there was no glossing over the main fact—that the Queen had refused her permission, point-blank, and that their marriage, if it took place, would not, at any rate for some time, be officially recognized. There was, of course, always the hope that the Queen, when she found how determined her cousin was, would relent—but after the exhibition of arrogance and bad-temper to which he had been a witness, it is doubtful if H.R.H. had much faith in such a hope.

One imagines, too, that he may have felt very dubious as to how Louisa would receive the news. The difference between being the recognized wife of a prince, and the unrecognized one, was, after all, very considerable. And

Louisa might well shy at the idea of a morganatic marriage.

But he need not have worried.

Louisa listened to his no doubt rather stumbling account of what had happened in silence, and then expressed herself as concerned only with the effect the marriage would have on her Prince.

And when he had reassured her about that, and expressed his own anxiety about her position in Society as his morganatic wife, she only smiled at him very sweetly and said :

“ What does it matter, George, dear ? After all it is *you* I want to marry—not just the Prince of Cambridge ! ”

Surely such love and trust was worth all the anger that a jealous Queen could pour out upon him ?

So the marriage took place. It was a very quiet wedding. Writing of it, Charles Kingston says : “ London Society was either scandalized or silent. The Duke’s choice was an insult to the noble cast. They boycotted the bride, and predicted that he would tire of her in a few years.

“ In 1840 public opinion was not strong enough to point the absurdity of the young wife being Mrs. Fitz-George, and her house in Queen Street not being the official home of her husband. But it was there he really lived. . . . ”

Plainly the young bride was faced with a difficult proposition. The Queen hated her. All the mothers of the nobility and Society with marriageable daughters hated her also (and, apparently, for much the same reason !). The men of the same classes felt that the Prince had slighted their womenfolk by *marrying* an actress. Never mind how pretty she was ! Dammit, an actress was an actress, any day in the week, and why the

need for *marriage* . . . ? Confound it, sir, *they* didn't do it! A little house in St. John's Wood would meet the case fittingly enough, surely . . . ?

That was the queer part of it. If Louisa had been contented to allow the Prince to be her "protector" they would have come along to her house and made quite a fuss of her. But as she was legally and honestly married to him, according to the rites of the Christian Church and the laws of the land—they boycotted her!

But Louisa did not seem to mind. She was quite happy in the house in Queen Street, and her Prince spent all the time he could possibly spare with her—and was happier when he was with her than when he was elsewhere. That was all she worried about.

Kingston says, again: ". . . If courtship had been idyllic, their marriage was equally so. Mrs. F. kept out of Court circles and intrigue. She had her own circle of select friends, which came to include the most famous and worth-while in the land. All who knew her fell under the charm of her radiant personality—not as the Duke of C.'s wife. And inspired by her, he devoted himself seriously to every duty. . . ."

Louisa, Mrs. FitzGeorge, soon numbered amongst her friends quite a collection of notabilities, including Mr. Gladstone, who was one of her greatest admirers. Like many others, he came originally to visit her at H.R.H.'s request, of course, but mainly out of curiosity. And like many others his curiosity was succeeded by a great and lasting admiration, which induced him to brave the displeasure of the Queen rather than forgo the pleasure he found in the society of the Prince's unrecognized wife. And that this displeasure was, indeed, something to be feared, is very clearly demonstrated by the marked paucity of any official or semi-official records of the

married life of the romantic young couple. Even the most scurrilous of the newspapers and journals (and in those days their scurrility was almost as great as their numbers) hardly dared to comment on the marriage at the time, or during its early years. It was only when Mrs. Fitzgeorge died, in 1890, that they let themselves go to any extent.

What Canon Sheppard, the Duke's official biographer, has to say about it is notable for its guarded discreetness.

Thus, he disposes of what was probably the most important event in the late Duke of Cambridge's whole life in something less than a couple of pages, and much of that is devoted to moralizing.

He says :

“ . . . The story of the Duke's marriage is soon told. In matrimony, as on other matters, from his very early days, His Royal Highness's views were clear, precise, and not easily subject to change. He held, and did not hesitate to make his conviction known that marriage without love was destined to end in failure and disaster, and that a union 'by arrangement' was a thing to be feared and detested. In letters written when he was little more than twenty years old he made it perfectly clear that in the choice of a wife no considerations of expediency would be allowed by him to weigh in the balance against the dictates of affection . . . he claimed that his private life was his own, to be disposed of by him as he might think fit and proper. It is not to be supposed that the Duke was allowed to hold these views without considerable opposition. . . . The marriage was of course morganatic, and as the Royal Consent was neither sought nor granted it followed that there was of necessity a sharp line of demarcation between the Duke's public and private life. . . . ”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sheppard, pp. 205-6.

The italics have been inserted. There is abundant evidence to prove that the Royal consent *was* sought, and angrily refused !

It is due to this conspiracy of silence, which was so very widespread, that there is so little to be told about the married life of the second Duke of Cambridge. But there is, at least, abundant evidence to prove that, during the fifty years it lasted, it was as idyllic and fraught with happiness to both of them, as it well could be. And this in circumstances which, in most cases, would have tended to make it most unhappy and disappointing.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE YEARS PASS, 1846-90

AS has been previously stated, the Prince was attached to the 12th Lancers at the end of 1839, and did duty with that regiment for some two years, during the latter part of the time in Ireland. While in command of the 17th Light Dragoons he took a prominent part in the suppression of the serious rioting in the manufacturing districts in 1842.

In the September of the following year he joined the Staff in the Ionian Islands, and remained there for two years.

1846 saw him back in Ireland once more, where after being promoted to the rank of Major-General he was appointed to the command of the Dublin district.

On January 19th, 1846, writing to his mother from Dublin, he says :

“ . . . as yet I know very little of my garrison here, but gradually I shall come to know them. To-day I have had the Cavalry and Artillery out. The day after to-morrow I shall see the Infantry. . . . ”

It would seem that not only did he very soon come to know his Garrison, but also that they must have come to know *him*, as witness a story told by Major-General Sir Archibald Amon, who in his book of memoirs, *About Myself and Others*, writes :

" The late Duke of Cambridge, at that time Prince George, commanded in Dublin, and at a cavalry field-day he had an officer from each of the three cavalry regiments and one from the horse-artillery on his staff for the occasion.

" Colonel Jackson was in command of the Carabineers, and the Prince, addressing the Staff, said :

" ' Go and tell Colonel Jackson, for God's sake, to do something, and not sit there looking like a fool ! '

" The Staff looked at one another, and the Lieutenant of the Carabineers reined back out of the way, but Tim Teilly conveyed the message, more or less exactly, and was told by the Colonel to ' Go to h-ll, sir, go to h-ll . . . ! '

In 1847, at the time of the famine in Ireland, when the misery of the people was so acute that it touched the heart of nearly every civilized nation—" even the heart of the Turk at far Dardanelles, and he sent her in pity the alms of a beggar . . ." while relief funds were being raised in almost every country, the Government made themselves look exceedingly ridiculous by the ostentatious manner in which they opened a public soup-kitchen in Dublin, run by a M. Soyer, a fashionable French chef, who proceeded to demonstrate with true Gallic efflorescence how very excellent soup could be made from the cheapest materials.

At this time Prince George wrote on various occasions to his mother :

" March 13th, 1847 : M. Soyer's journey here is somewhat of an absurdity . . . altogether the idea is repugnant to me that a French cook should make good the want of means of a Government ; that is very low form "

" Mar. 21st. M. Soyer is still here and very busy putting up his kitchen exactly in front of my house. . . . Heaven knows whether it will answer—I doubt it! . . ."

" Mar. 26th. I have now M. Soyer with his soup kitchen right under my nose. . . . It is to be opened to-morrow. . . . I regret to hear that illness is sadly increasing throughout the country. . . ."

He was right—the soup kitchen was, from the beginning, a predestined failure!

H.R.H. mentions the funeral of O'Connell in a letter dated April 12th :

" . . . O'Connell's funeral is over. I saw it from my windows. It was a very long procession, and a most enormous concourse of people. All the time fearful pouring rain, but the people were very orderly and quiet. . . ."

Everywhere in Europe during the year of 1848 the fires of revolution were either flaring or sulkily smouldering. Matters were at their worst on the Continent, but England did not escape scot-free. Chartist made its last abortive efforts, and in Ireland the Confederates were in open rebellion, the Young Irelanders fighting a pitched battle in the cabbage-garden at Ballingarry.

In a letter to his mother at this time, H.R.H. says :

" Here also we are on the point of revolution. . . . My position is difficult and anxious. . . . I do my utmost—more I cannot do. . . . The troops are faithful, good and true, that is certain, and I think we shall easily subdue the ill-disposed. . . ."

On August 7th, 1848 : " . . . I am sure you will have heard with real pleasure that Smith O'Brien has been arrested. It is a very important thing, and it is to be



MRS FITZGEORGE  
From a painting by Joy.



hoped will greatly conduce to the suppression of the Rebellion, and to break it all up. . . .”

William Smith O’Brien was the famous Irish agitator, and leader of the Young Ireland Party.

While “on the run” O’Brien was seen and recognized by a Government agent near the village of Thurles. The agent got to the village before him, and with the aid of the local police he effected the arrest of the fugitive without any very great trouble.

To hark back for a moment. On September 1st Prince George had written to his mother :

“. . . Sir Edward Blakeney is away in the country and I am alone here. Dublin is very empty and very dull. . . . In the mornings one is always occupied but the solitary evenings one does not know what to do with oneself. However, I occupy myself much with all sorts of military affairs, and thus get some experience and hope that anyhow time is not wasted. . . .”

How earnest and painstaking he was in these studies may be gauged from the fact that, on the Sunday morning following the arrest of O’Brien, Prince George was still up at 2 a.m., reading in his study. He was, in fact, the only one of the household who had not long since retired for the night.

Suddenly he was aroused from his absorption by a loud and imperative knocking at the front door, but which for all its loudness was not sufficient to awaken the servants, who slept in another part of the house.

It must be remembered that, at that time, Ireland was in a very disturbed state. Almost anything might happen at almost any moment, and the Prince did not lose sight of the fact that there might be, clustered round that front

door, a group of armed and desperate men who would riddle him with bullets on sight !

But he did not hesitate. Nor did he rouse the servants, or any other members of the household. He walked quietly and composedly to the front door, and flung it open.

And there, sure enough, were armed men !

But they were constables, and a second glance showed the Prince that they were guarding a prisoner—a muddied, tatterdemalion figure, who, however, stood strong and upright amidst his captors and eyed the Prince with a sort of amused defiance.

The Prince then recognized General Macdonald, A.D.C., who was in charge of the party.

The A.D.C. came forward :

“ I have pleasure to inform you, sir, that we have here the person of William Smith O’Brien, who has just been arrested at Thurles and has now been brought here to be handed over to you for safe custody ! ”

“ Good heavens ! ” exclaimed the Prince, delighted.  
“ What a wonderful stroke of luck ! ”

The prisoner interrupted, with a laugh :

“ For you, maybe—but not for me ! But there, 'tis always so, the good luck of one man is the bad misfortune of another ! ”

The Prince ignored this, though he looked at the prisoner with interest. In a letter to his mother describing this incident he says :

“ . . . I admitted the A.D.C. and shut the door, as I would not let Smith O’Brien himself in. . . . ”

This is interesting, because at the time the newspapers insisted that the Prince had had a long interview with the rebel.

Actually the Prince did not say a word to him, although he was greatly interested in the man and, as he himself admits, would very much like to have done so.

“. . . I should have much liked to see him, but I thought it would have a bad effect and therefore I let it alone, of which now I am doubly glad. . . .”

After a brief interview with the A.D.C., General Macdonald, the Prince roused his equerry, who by a coincidence possessed the same name—he was Captain J. Macdonald—and instructed him to take charge of the escort outside, and see that the prisoner was properly lodged in gaol.

Despite the lateness of the hour, the Prince then went to the stables, where he saddled and bridled his horse, mounted, and rode to Phoenix Park to announce the glad tidings, in person, to the Earl of Clarendon, the Lord Lieutenant.

It was a dirty night, black, and drizzling with a singularly penetrating rain, so that before he got to his destination H.R.H.’s person was considerably dampened—but not his ardour. It was not even shaken by the fact that he had to knock and thump on the Lord Lieutenant’s door for nearly half an hour before he could make anyone hear!

The Earl was delighted with the intelligence :

“ Well,” he said, “ you have awakened me from a fine sleep to tell me this, but I shall sleep again all the better for knowing it ! ”

When the Prince got back to his quarters, he found his equerry awaiting him to report that O’Brien was safely caged. The Prince says, in the letter to his mother :

“ . . . Jim told me he never saw a man so quiet and collected in so critical a position. He is prepared for

everything, and says he did not succeed because it was six weeks too early, and that had he had those six weeks longer the whole country would have followed him. Well, heaven be praised we have got him, and everything is quite quiet. . . .”

It was shortly after this incident that Prince George displayed a quiet heroism and spirit of self-sacrifice quite natural to him, but none the less admirable.

About the end of August, 1849, he had arranged for a period of leave, being very desirous of spending a time with his family at Kew. He was looking forward to this leave with considerable eagerness, as some of his letters show.

And then there broke out in Dublin an epidemic of cholera which was responsible for a terrible mortality, and which did not spare the troops quartered there. Both officers and men, in many cases, were desperately anxious to get away from the plague-stricken city, for there are many men who, brave enough in the face of any enemy, yet have a mortal fear of disease. Some of the officers actually managed to get leave, and departed with considerable haste.

But not so the Prince. His leave having been actually arranged before the outbreak, he could easily have taken the fullest advantage of it, and no one could have suggested that he was showing the white feather. But he chose to remain, and sent every day letters to his anxiously waiting mother, announcing that his arrival would be delayed, until he ceased writing for fear of alarming her.

It was even suggested to him that there was no reason why he should risk his health, and very possibly his life, by remaining within scope of the infection. But he

refused to go, and on September 19th he wrote to the Duchess of Cambridge :

“ . . . I have not written, hoping day by day to get to you, but from various causes have had to put off my journey. I felt I could not possibly leave the garrison so long as the cholera was so seriously raging in the town. Thank God, it is now diminishing day by day, and I hope now positively to be able soon to get to you. . . . ”

Nor did he go until he was assured that the epidemic was practically stamped out.

A letter from the Prince to Captain Mildmay, dated from Dublin on December 3rd, 1849, contains an interesting reference to Louis Napoleon of France. The Prince says :

“ . . . Louis Napoleon is a wonderful fellow ; he does the most extraordinary things, apparently with impunity, and has gained popularity by them. Still I fancy he cannot go on long in this way. . . . ”

In this same month, December, Queen Adelaide died, and on this occasion the Prince wrote to his mother as follows :

“ *December 4th*,—yesterday I received news of the death of the good beloved Queen, and I can assure you although I had been long expecting the sad intelligence, when it came in truth it upset me terribly, and I feel indeed I have lost a true dear relation and friend in the dear departed. It is well with her, of that I am assured, she was so good and pious in all her feelings that the end was soft and easy for her. And then, poor soul, she suffered so cruelly in the last months that one could really not wish a prolongation of her sufferings. Yet her loss is quite terrible for all her surroundings, and for

the thousands who depended upon her kindness. For myself she was a remembrance of the dear, good old times, which, alas ! are past and gone. I pity beyond all things the poor Duchess. . . . Naturally I shall come over for the funeral, and I would not for anything fail to attend it, as indeed I am bound to pay my last duty and love to her who has ever done so endlessly much for me. I am only waiting to learn when the funeral will probably take place, and shall then come at once. . . .”

Early in 1850 there sprang up in some way a rumour that Prince George was about to become King of Greece, and that he was not actually in Dublin at all, but at Zante, industriously studying the Greek language and also the manners and customs of the country in preparation for the honour about to be conferred upon him !

So much credence did this rumour gain that *The Times* actually gave publication to it, for in a letter to his mother the Prince says :

“ . . . Did you see in *The Times* of the day before yesterday the ludicrous account from Athens that they intend to make me King of Greece, and that therefore I am at Zante, studying Greek ? . . . ”

He mentions it also in a letter to his father, the Duke of Cambridge, dated from Dublin on February 24th :

“ . . . I am sure you will have been as much amused as myself by the absurd rumours which come from Greece in regard to myself and the Greek kingdom. I am delighted to find that I have been studying Greek at Zante ! as I am represented to have done. I think it very possible that this may have originated in some mistake about Mildmay ! who, you know, was detained for a considerable period at Zante by stress of weather. . . . ”

In a letter to this Captain Mildmay, who was his father's equerry, he enlarged on this theory :

“ . . . How did you enjoy your trip to Athens, and what do you think of the affairs of Greece? . . . My opinion is that, however ill the Greeks have behaved to us—and they have done so, nobody knows better than I do—nothing can justify our recent conduct to them, and that as a stroke of Policy it is the very worst that ever was made, as it will force them into the arms of the very Powers whose influence we are anxious to counteract. You will be amused to hear that in connexion with this affair a correspondent from Athens said that I was to be made King of Greece, and that I was studying Greek at Zante, to qualify for this position. My firm belief is, that the mistake as regards the latter part of the story originated with your having been detained so long at Zante, and having heard something of the Duke of Cambridge, you being his equerry, they have no doubt jumbled all this together, and made you out for me! ”

To a friend who was chaffing him about this rumour it is said that the Prince retorted :

“ I can assure you that I have no ambitions in that direction. I would rather be a commoner in England than the King of any other nation! ”

This love of England also finds expression in another letter to Captain Mildmay, in which he says :

“ . . . one feels that everything here is so superior to what one has seen that one is doubly proud of being an Englishman, and of belonging to a nation that has such a country to live in . . . ! ”

It is a fact that, all through his life, a great and unselfish love for England was one of the Prince's strongest

and most marked characteristics. But he was not (as the reference to Greece given in his letter to Captain Mildmay proves) by any means blind to her faults, and it was for this reason that he was, from a very early age, always very anxious to get into Parliament.

In a letter to his mother, sent from Dublin in January, 1848, for instance, he says :

“ . . . How pleasant it would be if I could find occupation in your neighbourhood ; and that such could be found if the Horse Guards were really well-disposed towards me, of that I am fully persuaded. *Often, often I regret not being in Parliament ! That would be the greatest interest to me, and I literally pine for it.*”<sup>1</sup>

He was very soon to achieve that ambition, though, alas ! in a manner he would hardly have chosen !

In the summer of 1849 Queen Victoria and Prince Albert paid a visit to Dublin, where Prince George was in command.

The Queen was, during her visit, graciousness itself to H.R.H., and in a letter to his mother, under the date of August 15th, 1849, he says :

“ . . . the grace and favour and affection for me shown by the Queen, and at the same time the friendly and hearty tone of Albert were such that I can only be flattered. . . .”

The Queen presented H.R.H. with the Order of St. Patrick, and then the Royal pair returned to England, she, one rather surmises, with a comfortable feeling that she had demonstrated very effectively to George how much he had missed, and how foolish he had been to share his life in obscurity with an “ actress-woman,”

<sup>1</sup> *Italics inserted*

rather than to do as he might have done—bask comfortably in the affection and reflected glory of a Queen.

In 1850 the question of conferring a Peerage upon Prince George was mooted, the idea being that he would be very useful in the House of Lords.

On June 10th, Queen Victoria wrote to the Duke of Cambridge (her uncle and Prince George's father) expressing her willingness to confer a Peerage upon H.R.H. as the Earl of Tipperary. She added: "I am confident that George will be very moderate in his politics and support the Government whenever he can. . . ."

On the 15th H.R.H. wrote a very formal letter to "My Dear Cousin," thanking her for acceding to the request of his father, and in the course of his letter he said:

" . . . As regards the wish expressed by yourself that I should not allow myself to be made a political partisan, I need not, I trust, assure you that it will be ever my endeavour to obey upon this as on all occasions; but I trust I may be permitted to add that even before this desire expressed by you it had been my intention to follow this line of conduct."

He concludes his letter by saying: ". . . Hoping to have pleasure soon of expressing to you my gratitude in person. I remain, my dear Cousin, Your most dutiful Cousin, GEORGE."

In reply, Victoria wrote a letter which began: "My Dear George, Many thanks for your kind letter . . . etc., etc.," and which ended, "Ever, etc., VICTORIA R."

In all correspondence H.R.H. invariably addressed her as "My Dear Cousin," while she always appeared to have opened hers with "My Dear George," and to have ended them either "Yours affectionately" or "Ever, etc."—the former apparently when she was comparatively

pleased with him ; the latter when she was *not* so pleased !

In this case the peerage-patent was duly made out, but was held over on account of the serious illness of the Duke of Cambridge. From this illness he never recovered ; three weeks later he was dead.

Prince George automatically succeeded to his title, and therefore to the House of Lords, so that the Tipperary was not necessary after all. Nevertheless, it was bestowed with that of Culloden.

The same entry in H.R.H.'s Diary which contains some account of his father's symptoms in his last illness contains also a passing reference to a very dramatic and startling episode. Says Prince George :

" . . . Called at the Palace to see the Queen. She then came to Cambridge House, and in driving out, a miscreant, Pate by name, late Lieutenant 10th Hussars, struck her with a stick in the face. Not much injured, thank God, but bruised. . . . "

The actual details are as follows :

According to the newspaper reports at the time, while the Queen was at Cambridge House, a man was noticed loitering outside the gates, as though waiting for Her Majesty to emerge. As, however, he was well-dressed and apparently a gentleman, and as it was not unusual for a gentleman to pause in his walk to watch the Queen come or go, no great notice was taken of him.

When, however, she drove out of the gates at a little after 6 p.m., and just as the carriage was slowly turning the corner, the man suddenly sprang on to the step and struck the Queen across the head with his stick, a light affair, about two feet six inches long, and with a crooked handle.

He was seized by bystanders and handed over to the police, who took him to Vine Street Police Station. Here he gave his name as Robert Pate, of 27, Duke Street, St. James's.

Meanwhile the Queen had driven back to the Palace, "amid the cheers of the populace."

Her Majesty was not badly hurt. She had sustained a nasty bruise on the side of the temple, with the skin just broken, and her bonnet had been crushed.

Pate would give no reason for his assault upon Her Majesty, but it was discovered that he was an ex-Lieutenant of the 10th Hussars, who, on account of his eccentric behaviour, had been persuaded to sell out in 1846, as an alternative to being court-martialled.

At the trial it was clearly proved that he was mad. Evidence was given to the effect that, while in the Army, he thought that the cooks and mess-servants were trying to poison him, and that he complained to the Medical Officer that his stomach was full of bricks and stones which he wanted removed. Also that it was his habit each morning to have a hot bath, to which whisky and camphor had been added, and to "sing and shout while in it."

Dr. Conolly, head physician of Hanwell Asylum, pronounced the prisoner insane, as did Dr. Morris.

The jury, however, brought in a verdict of "Guilty," and the Judge, Mr. Baron Alderson, told the prisoner that because of his family (his father had been Sheriff of Cambridgeshire in 1848) he would not inflict upon him "the disgraceful punishment of whipping," but that, in order to prevent any further outbreaks on his part for a long period, he would be "transported beyond the seas for a period of seven years."

This sentence was duly carried out; and Robert Pate

was transported to Australia ; resided in Hobart Town, Tasmania ; and finally returned to England where he died at his old home, "Broughton," Ross Road, South Norwood, S.E., on February 6th, 1895, his will being proved for £22,464.

The death of his father was a severe blow to H.R.H. (who hereafter will be called by his later title, the Duke of Cambridge). He had a trying and anxious time during the old Duke's last illness, which was not improved by the tragic death of Sir Robert Peel. In one letter, written at the time, he says : ". . . Nothing but horrors takes place. Poor Peel, is it not dreadful ! "

In another letter, written to a member of his Staff in Ireland, he gives an account of his father's death, and concludes on a note of deep feeling and genuine resignation : ". . . it will be long, long before I shall get over it. It is a gratification, though a most melancholy one, to have tended my dearest Father to the last, and to have, I trust, in some degree alleviated the sufferings of his last moments. I have lost a Father, and the best friend I had on earth. I remain, your most sincere and afflicted friend, GEORGE."

Shortly after his father's death, the new Duke had an informal conference with the Queen and Prince Albert on the subject of himself, his future plans, and, in particular, his position in the country. He expressed himself afterwards as appreciating very deeply the kind and considerate manner in which Victoria behaved at this interview. "Nothing could be more kind . . . than the manner in which she expressed herself about all of us. . . ."

Thereafter the House of Commons voted £12,000 a year for the new Duke, and £3000 for each of his sisters, the Princesses Mary and Augusta. His comment on this

in his Diary is very brief and to the point : "This income very satisfactory at the present time."

Late in July he took his seat for the first time in the House of Lords, formally introduced by the Duke of Wellington and the Duke of Beaufort.

During the next recess the Lord Chancellor raised the point that H.R.H. was not entitled to rank as a Royal Duke, and that he should take precedence only according to the date on which the Dukedom was created, which was 1801.

The Duke took up the challenge, and contested the point vigorously, and had no difficulty in finding plenty of support, not merely in Court circles, but also amongst some of the greater legal luminaries of the day. And when Parliament reassembled, he took his seat in the House of Lords as a Royal Duke, without opposition from the Lord Chancellor or anyone else.

About this time Queen Victoria wrote to him :

" . . . I can easily imagine how painful the breaking up of the establishment at Cambridge House—the departure of your mother and sisters—and the return to the lonely house must have been. . . . You will easily believe how happy we were that your Income was so satisfactorily voted in Parliament, and much rejoiced to think that we had been able to be of use to you on this occasion. Let me repeat, dear George, how anxious we ever shall be to be of use to you, and to show you that you have true friends in both of us who entertain truly *Geschwisterliche Gefuhle* towards you. . . . "

*Geschwisterliche Gefuhle* means "brotherly feelings." Brotherly feelings ! Perhaps that was a better translation of the feelings of George to Cousin Victoria. So it was through all the years.

Young Prince George looking down on the "plain little girl of Kensington Palace." George receiving honour from the new Queen. . . . George as Victoria's opening partner at the State Balls. . . . George running away from the rumours of Husband and Consort. . . . George facing Victoria's anger when the Other Woman trod on Holy Ground. . . . Victoria helping George, then leaning on his shoulder. . . . Two characters that clashed, yet indelibly bound together. . . . Two friends walking hand-in-hand through the same eighty years of life, a friendship that outlived all others.

Late in August the Duke returned to Ireland, and at once took up his duties in Dublin, remaining there until October, when he paid a brief visit to Germany, after which he returned to London.

About this time, in another letter to Captain Mildmay, he makes a further interesting reference to Louis Napoleon :

" . . . I wish I could see Louis Napoleon reviewing the Fleet at Cherbourg ; it will be a very fine sight, I think. I cannot but think that it must end by his being Emperor sooner or later ! Wonderful when one remembers the insignificant figure he cut in England. . . ."

With the Duke's return to London it soon became evident that he still stood high in Victoria's favour. On January 18th, 1851, rooms in St. James's Palace were, by *special command of the Queen*, placed at his disposal.

And in June of the same year it is recorded that, at a costume ball given at Buckingham Palace, he was selected, with two others, as the Queen's sole partners. In his *V.R.I., Her Life and Empire* the Marquis of Lorne (Duke of Argyll) gives a very vivid account of this function, which may aptly be quoted in full :

" A costume ball given at Buckingham Palace later in the year greatly occupied the minds of those who received invitations. It was a ball intended to give impetus to the trade of London, and was descriptive of the time of the Stuarts. It is chronicled that Miss Burdett-Coutts was one of the earliest arrivals, wearing a broad band of emeralds, and diamonds, after the manner of a gentleman's baldric, over the right shoulder to the left hip.

" The Queen and Prince were seated in the Throne-room when the company entered and made their bow. The guests walked in procession up the whole length of the room, made obeisance before the throne, and passed into the Picture Gallery. Lord Clifden, then Leopold Ellis, Herald-at-Arms, followed by four pages suitably arrayed—Lord Vaughan, Mr. Seymour Egerton, Lord Richard Grosvenor, and Mr. Fraser—entered, and joined the national quadrilles assembled in the next room. The orchestra then played a march, and a Spanish quadrille entered, preceded by their page. Then came the French, the Scotch, and the English. The English first danced together, the others after them. They then formed up in line and made their reverence.

" The Queen and Prince now went to the ballroom, where another quadrille preceded a polonaise or walk round the room, the Queen dancing with the Prince, the Duke of Cambridge, and Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar. The waving feathers, flowing curls, slashed sleeves and ruffles, picturesque baldricks, and bright coats, made a very pretty scene.

" At 12.15 Lord Westminster, the Lord Steward, showed the way to the State supper. Dancing again took place afterwards, a Highland reel being danced by some of the Scottish ladies and gentlemen.

" The Queen wore a grey watered silk trimmed with

gold and silver lace, with bows of rose-coloured ribbons fastened by bunches of diamonds. The front of the dress opened ; the underskirt was of cloth of gold and silver fringe. The shoes and gloves were embroidered with roses and fleurs-de-lis in gold. On the front of the dress were large pear-shaped emeralds. The head-dress was a small diamond crown and emeralds, and the hair was plaited with pearls.

“ The Prince Consort wore a rich orange coat, sleeves turned up with crimson velvet, pink epaulette on shoulder, baldric in silver ; breeches, crimson velvet, pink satin bows, and gold lace ; stockings lavender silk. Hat with white ostrich feathers.

“ The Duke of Wellington’s costume was that of a General of the period of the restoration of Charles II. Scarlet cloth frock coat, double rows of gold lace, white satin slashed sleeves, lace of gold, point lace collar and ruffles, blue velvet trunks, broad gold lace seams slashed with white satin, point lace at knees (which at this time were sadly bent), crimson silk sash, gold tassels, gold sword belt, Order of the Garter, bows of point lace, hat with white and blue plumes, and the collar of the Golden Fleece. The dresses worn at the ball were all of British manufacture.”

From these two incidents it is quite evident that the Queen’s feelings towards her Cousin George were still of the kindest, and that she was delighted to single him out for the bestowal of her favours on every possible occasion, both public and private.

From '51 to '53 the Duke remained in London, fully occupied with military duties and social services, mainly concerned with various charities, for which he was in great demand. Thus, from the Diary :

" February 26th, 1851 : Went to London Tavern at 6, and presided at dinner for the German Hospital. It went off very well, and we made a collection of nearly £2000. . . ."

There are many similar entries in the Diary about this period.

The year 1851 was the year of the opening of the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park. Like many soldiers, the Duke was not favourably impressed by the idea of a "festival of peace," designed, by drawing men of all nations together in the common pursuit of moral and peaceful progress, to spell the end of war, and the beginning of a new age of international understanding and amity. He writes to Captain Mildmay, his great friend :

" . . . I think myself that London will be detestable and I wish that the exhibition were at the devil ! . . . "

But a little later, in his Diary, he admits that the exhibition was "a very magnificent and wonderful sight. . . . Delighted to have been present. . . ."

About this time he received a very cordial and affectionate letter, acknowledging receipt of his father's insignia of various Russian Orders, returned to him on the old Duke's death, from the Tsar, Nicholas—against whom, some three years later, the Duke was to be fighting in the field !

In September, 1852, the Duke of Wellington died, and the Queen wrote to the Duke on this subject :

" MY DEAR GEORGE,

" You will, I know, join in the grief of the whole nation at the loss of that great and immortal man, whom it has been my privilege, I may truly say, to have known intimately . . . one cannot realise at all the possibility of

his being no longer amongst us, or think of England without him. . . .”

At the Duke's funeral, on September 18th, H.R.H. was in command of the troops. He describes the funeral briefly in his Diary :

“. . . Though most unpromising in the morning, it turned out a most beautiful day. Up and dressed by 6.15. . . . Everything went off to perfection . . . the masses of people enormous ; their conduct dignified and admirable in the extreme. . . . The interior of St. Paul's very fine. . . . Got home safe and sound, though a good deal tired, by 5.30. . . .”

In 1854 came the Crimean War, following the Tsar's ignoring of the British ultimatum. From the beginning the Duke was all eagerness to get out on active service, and on February 16th he writes :

“. . . Went to Horse Guards, and there heard that I had a good chance of going out. At 2.30 the Duke of Newcastle”—(*then Secretary of State for War*)—“came who announced to me my good fortune in being appointed to a Division in the expeditionary force. . . .”

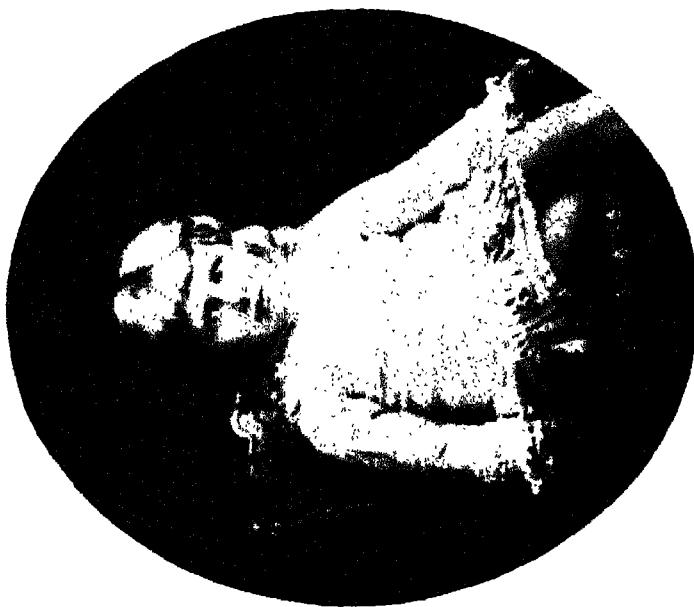
War had not then actually been declared—the open rupture did not occur until some weeks later, early in March.

The Duke continued :

“Overjoyed at this news. Communicated it to all my friends. . . .”

At White's Club sixty members gave him a farewell dinner on February 25th. On March 4th fifty members of Boodle's gave him another. On the 25th he dined at

THE AUTHOR AT THE AGES OF FIVE AND THIRTY





the Palace, where Queen Victoria gave a dinner in honour of his birthday "and a very pretty little dance afterwards." And at 8.30 p.m. on April 10th, the Duke left England, *en route* for the Crimea.

He proceeded first to Paris, where he was to confer with the Emperor Louis Napoleon. He was given apartments at the Tuileries, and in connection with this Victoria gave him a definite snub.

She wrote an angry letter to her Foreign Secretary, Lord Clarendon, in the course of which she said :

" . . . It was unnecessary and unusual for the Duke, or any Prince almost, to live at the *Palace* of the Sovereign, unless he was a very particular friend or near relation. There would be nothing unusual in apartments being offered to the Duke of Cambridge and declined by him. . . . "

An epitome of the Duke's visit to Paris on this occasion may be given in his own words, being extracts from his Diary at this period :

" *April 10th* : After a sad day spent in taking leave from so many kind and dear friends, in short such a day as I should indeed be sorry to spend again, and after a small dinner with Adolphus Fitzclarence, left London by the train at 8.30, and reached Dover at 11.30. . . . "

On this journey the Duke records that his chief companions were as follows.

Lord Raglan, whose name has since gone down to posterity in connection with the Crimean War, and who was previously Lord Fitzroy Somerset, son of the fifth Duke of Beaufort. He was a man of considerable military experience, having been Chief of the Staff to the Duke of Wellington throughout the Peninsular War, and his

Chief Military Secretary at the Horse Guards, when the Duke was Commander-in-Chief of the British Army.

Lord De Ros, the twenty-third Baron, afterwards Quarter-Master-General in the Crimea.

The remainder of the party was made up of the Duke's Equerry, Captain " Jim " Macdonald, Captain Tyrwhitt, destined in after years to become the Duke's A.D.C., Colonel Poulett Somerset, who was the son of Lord Charles Somerset, and was later attached to Lord Raglan's staff in the Crimea, and Colonel Frederick Wellesley, who was in the military-diplomatic service in Vienna.

The Duke goes on to record that the party :

" . . . embarked at once on board the *Vivid*, Captain Smithett, and had a good passage to Calais. Were received by the Mayor and authorities, also an A.D.C. of the Emperor. Left by special train at 2.30 in uniform, and reached Paris at 9.30."

" 11th : Was received by Marshal Vaillant, a Guard of Honour, the Royal Carriages, and an escort, and went direct to the Embassy, where put up admirably by Lord and Lady Cowley. The reception was excellent and hearty. Cries of ' Vivent les Anglais ! ' heard in different directions, the people very respectful. After breakfast went in State to the Tuilleries ; the reception of the Emperor Louis Napoleon cordial and dignified ; his conversation open and candid. . . . I had a long conversation with him . . . presented to him a letter from the Queen, which pleased him much. Was then presented to the Empress, who is certainly very handsome."

" 12th : Up at 8, breakfast at 10, then saw the Prussian Minister, Count Hatzfeldt, an agreeable and intelligent

man, who spoke most feelingly about the present position of Prussia with reference to the Western Powers. At 12.30 went to the Tuileries, and at 1 started for the Champs de Mars on horseback with the Emperor, to be present at the Great Review he had prepared for me of about 30,000 men. The masses of people enormous, the enthusiasm very great not only for the Emperor but also for the English. . . .”

The Duke then gives a long and somewhat technical description of the review, concluding with: “. . . This terminated the proceedings, which gave me a very favourable impression of the French Army and proved the cordiality of feelings which now so happily exists between the two nations, long it is to be hoped to last !”

“ April 13th: At 9 went to visit the barracks of the Guides. This is a beautiful Corps, the horses magnificent, the barracks comfortable, the men look healthy, and are well taken care of. . . . Colonel Fleury, a very intelligent officer, commands this regiment. . . . Then went to the Tuileries, where we had a military meeting consisting of the Emperor, Prince Jerome, Marshals St. Arnaud and Vaillant, Lords Raglan and de Ros, and myself. The affairs of the East were discussed, but no very definite conclusion was arrived at. After two hours of discussion, the Emperor drove me in his phaeton through the new Rue de Rivoli he is making—a very magnificent work. . . .”

On the 17th, which was the day following Easter Sunday, the Emperor sent for the Duke, and proposed that he should go to Vienna. The Duke replied that he was quite willing to go, but must first consult the English Government. Accordingly he sent a telegram, which, in

due course, elicited a reply to the effect that he should do this.

At home there was some harsh criticism directed against him in the Press because he had not gone direct to the seat of war. What they did not realise was that he was not merely enjoying himself on the Continent in a round of theatres, dinners, pageants, and amusements, but was engaged in the prosecution of a carefully planned political purpose.

The Duke having fulfilled his mission at Vienna, went on to Constantinople, which he reached on May 10th. Under the date of the 22nd of that month, his Diary contains the following : " The mail has come in from England with lots of letters from the Queen, etc. All highly satisfactory and everybody much pleased at the success of my mission to Vienna and at the manner in which I had conducted it. The Radical Press attacked me for delaying on the road, but I was well defended by the Duke of Newcastle in the House of Lords, and by *The Times*. . . ."

On May 3rd Queen Victoria wrote to him :

" . . . Lord Clarendon showed me your long letter to him, and I am anxious to express to you our pleasure and satisfaction at the manner in which you have acquitted of your delicate mission at Vienna. . . ."

By June 18th H.R.H. was in camp near Varna with his Division. He describes it, in a letter, as " a most dreadful place, the picture of filth and misery, but singularly bustling. . . . " Here the troops were beset by cholera and fever, which, as the Duke wrote, was " a very sad drawback to all our proceedings and operations."

On the 20th he took an active part in the battle of Alma and mentions that he had " some narrow escapes."

By October 8th he was encamped on the heights near Sebastopol. At the battle of Inkerman he was grazed by a bullet on the arm, and his horse was wounded.

The Queen wrote to the Duchess of Cambridge after the accounts of Inkerman had reached her :

“ . . . My Dear Aunt—I must wish you joy that our precious George has been preserved. God watched mercifully over him in the glorious battle of the 5th. . . . ”

And to the Duke she wrote :

“ Thank God ! that you are safe after this fearful but glorious battle of the 5th. But how many we have to deplore ! Four General Officers killed and five wounded, and how many of them we know may not have fallen ! It is dreadful to wait in uncertainty until we know the fate of so many . . . ! ”

On November 14th a great storm swept over Balaklava, and the Duke was in considerable danger. The story is, perhaps, best told in his own words. In the Diary, under the date of November 14th, he writes :

“ This was, without any exception, the most fearful day of my life. At about 5 o’c this morning, the wind, which had hitherto been strong, began to freshen and was soon a gale, and by 8 o’clock it was blowing a perfect hurricane, with a most fearful sea on. It came upon us so suddenly and unexpectedly that we could not get to sea, and were obliged to lie *there* (just outside Balaklava harbour) making the best of it and hoping for the best. It soon, however, became evident that our position was a most critical one and that we were in great danger from our proximity to the shore and the coast, a fearfully steep and rocky one. The transports near us were driving fearfully at their anchors, and the *Rip-van-Winkle* as nearly as possible got foul of us, when she must have gone.

Providentially this was avoided, but the unfortunate transport soon was ashore, and all the hands but two or three perished. At 10 our rudder was carried away, and then all the upper deck guns and shot were thrown overboard. This lightened the ship considerably and no doubt principally contributed to saving her. At 12 two Anchors went out of her, and we now had only one left and our steam that could possibly save us. At 2 a thunderbolt fell, and struck the ship with a heavy shower of hail. This cleared the atmosphere and the wind went gradually down, though the sea continued as fearful as ever. Had we had a rudder, we would have made a start, as several others did, but, totally helpless without one, we were obliged to remain in our most critical position about 200 yards from the shore. Thus we lay all night, hoping for the best, and a most fearful and awful 24 hours we spent, but God's mercy came to our rescue and we were most providentially saved."

" 15th : After a most anxious night and no sleep, the morning broke calm, with only a heavy swell on. A boat was sent for a tug, which at length arrived at about 12, took us in tow and brought us safely into Balaklava harbour, where we received the congratulations of our friends on our most providential escape. The scene both inside and outside the harbour was marvellous in the extreme. Eight transports were lost outside, including the unfortunate steamer *Prince*, and with the exception of about 50 all hands perished. All the other transports without exception that were outside were dismasted. Inside too, the damage done was fearful, the vessels in endeavouring to run in having regularly cut one another down by 'fouling.' Never was there such a sight, and the loss in stores and provision for the army is most distressing. . . ."

It is somewhat interesting to compare this entry in the Diary with certain others dealing with quite different subjects. Before writing it the Duke had undoubtedly just undergone an experience that would have shaken most men—did, indeed, rattle the nerves of many experienced sailors. Yet it will be observed that the Duke writes of it with the utmost restraint, and far from exaggerating the affair, does not, in fact, really do it justice. It is a cold, restrained, and rather detached record of the bare events, and hardly once is the first person singular used throughout the whole account. For instance, to be on a wooden ship in the midst of a terrific hurricane when it is struck by a thunderbolt is an experience liable to produce a very considerable effect upon any individual, but all the Duke has to say about it is that “At 2 a thunderbolt struck the ship with a heavy shower of hail. This cleared the atmosphere. . . .” Not a word about his own feelings or sensations in regard to it! Nowhere in this account of a very terrifying personal experience is to be found the slightest touch of that eloquence which he uses almost always in describing, for instance, the death or illness of some relative or friend!

It was shortly after this that the Duke wrote a letter to Queen Victoria which embodied not only his opinion on the condition of the forces in the Crimea at the time, but also some comments on that incident which has since become famous as the Charge of the Light Brigade.

The letter is dated November 2nd, 1854, from the Heights above Sebastopol :

“ MY DEAR COUSIN :

“ I have long delayed writing to you, hoping from day to day to be able to tell you of the fall of Sebastopol, but this operation has, alas! proved itself so far more

protracted and difficult than we first anticipated that it really is now impossible to tell how much longer it may last, and I, therefore, cannot let another post leave us without thanking you and Albert most sincerely for the very kind and flattering letters I received from you upon hearing of the Battle of Alma. I am truly grateful, I assure you, for my personal safety, and with you deplore the heavy loss we there sustained. Certainly the moment of victory was a heart-stirring moment to us all, and to none more than myself, who found myself providentially saved, whereas so many of my brave Division around me had fallen. War, however, is a fearful scene, and I can assure you the scenes we had afterwards and which we have since witnessed have given me the greatest horror of it. Still we at least have the feeling that we are fighting in a just cause, and with God's blessing I trust we may ere long accomplish our task and then may look forward to peace. Still, I fear we may yet have some hard blows to give and receive, and the season is advancing with rapid strides. The cold is now intense and I assure you on these heights with frost on the ground, in small tents, and without the least warmth or comfort, it is a most unpleasant position to be in. We, therefore, pray for a speedy termination to this dreary work, and then hope and pray for winter quarters, for how it will be possible to exist without covering for either man or horse, I cannot imagine. We have an immense number of sick, and it is with difficulty we keep well. This army wants a thorough rest and reorganization, otherwise I fear it will be found by next Spring very few of us will be left. . . . The firing has now continued more or less for nearly a month, and as fast as one Russian Battery is destroyed another seems to spring up. Still I hope from all accounts the Garrison is much disheartened and has suffered severely

and, as the French are getting very close to the town, I trust that in a few days more they may be able to make a lodgement in it. We shall then see whether or not the Garrison will hold out much longer. The Ships will, I fear, prove our great difficulty—of these there are still, I believe, 20 left, and they will rake the whole town, I apprehend, after we have entered it. Our great delay has been on the part of the French, and we can do nothing till they get in, on our left. We had two very exciting days last week. One was a very sharp attack on Balaklava, which fortunately was saved, tho' our Allies, the Turks, ran away and abandoned their guns in the most shameful manner. It was on this day that our Heavy Dragoons made a splendid and most successful charge, entirely routing a very superior force of Russian Cavalry, and afterwards, by a sad mistake, our Light Cavalry made one of the most brilliant but senseless attacks that ever could have been imagined, and suffered most severely. In fact they are more than half destroyed. Still, the gallantry of the thing nothing that can be imagined could surpass. The following day a sortie was made, upon the position of General Evans. About 8,000 came out of Sebastopol in the most determined manner, but they were so badly met by Evans with the 2nd Division, that they were completely routed, with very heavy loss indeed on their side. It is estimated at about 600 men. The amount of Artillery that we could bring against them was very fortunate and the 2nd Division behaved most nobly and Evans commanded them to perfection. On both occasions I had nothing to do, with my Division, further than to look on, as on both days I was sent in support. We are now extremely anxious about Balaklava, in front of which the Russian Army is posted, and the whole Brigade of Highlanders are now there under Sir Colin

Campbell for its defence. I am thus reduced to a very small personage up here with my one Brigade of Guards, and now we have the whole Russian Army in our rear, and it is to this point that I specially look. Since the day at Balaklava they have established themselves in front of that place and to our rear, and are there in considerable strength, indeed I should think it was their whole Army, but how strong they are I do not know. It is an interesting and critical moment, but I hope under God's blessing all will end well. . . ."

Another letter of about this time which has interest was one written by the Duke of Newcastle to the Duchess of Cambridge, shortly after news of the battle of Inkermann had reached England. It was dated November 22nd :

" Madam, Permit me to congratulate your Royal Highness first upon the honourable mention of the Duke of Cambridge in Lord Raglan's Despatch published in the *Gazette* this day, and secondly upon the happy escape of His Royal Highness from the wounds and death which have deprived the Country of the services of so many of the gallant men in that Division of the Army which he commanded on the memorable 5th of November. In case Your Royal Highness should not have received letters after the battle from the Duke of Cambridge, I write to inform Your Royal Highness that Lord Raglan has advised the Duke of Cambridge to go down to Constantinople for a few days to recruit his strength, which has somewhat suffered from the anxieties of the Siege, the exposure to a tent life, and the want of rest. Lord Raglan expresses the hope that His Royal Highness will return to the Army very shortly in fresh strength and vigour—so that I think Your Royal Highness need be under no

uneasiness on account of this temporary surrender of the command of the 1st Division. . . . Your Royal Highness will hear with pleasure that Lord Raglan speaks in the highest terms of praise of the services rendered to the Duke of Cambridge by Major Macdonald and of his admirable conduct in the field on every occasion. Your Royal Highness will, I am sure, greatly rejoice in the great and glorious victory of the British Arms—almost eclipsing the brilliant day at the Alma. I have the honour to be, Madam, Your Royal Highness's obedient humble servant,

NEWCASTLE."

As indicated in this letter the Duke's health had suffered under the privations which that unfortunate Army endured, and on November 25th he was sent to Constantinople to recuperate. But he did not improve—the attacks of fever and ague to which he had become a victim continued, and, after examination by a medical board, it was decided that he should return home.

On December 29th, 1854, the Duke went by boat to Scutari, and was shown over the hospital there, where he met Florence Nightingale. He described her as "a most unaffected, nice-looking person. . . ."

On the subject of this same lady, Queen Victoria wrote an interesting letter to the Duke, in 1856, in which she said :

" We have made Miss Nightingale's acquaintance, and are delighted and very much struck with her great gentleness, simplicity, and wonderfully clear and comprehensive head. I wish we had her at the War Office ; Her Modesty and unselfishness are really hardly to be believed and she is so ladylike. . . ."

The Duke seems to have been very reluctant to act on the medical advice and return home. On January 1st, 1855, he writes in his Diary :

" . . . Thus commences another year. Alas ! Its commencement is anything but cheerful . . . "

However, he went to Malta for a time, and from there, at the end of January, he sailed for England, via Paris, where he was graciously received by the Emperor and Empress. He finally landed at Dover on the 30th, and received a warm reception. He reached London on the 31st, and was sent for on that day by the Queen who :

" . . . received me most kindly and graciously together with the Prince. I was sometime with her, and I lunched with her . . . "

So much for the official and semi-official accounts of the Duke's activities during the Crimean War, which came to an end on March 30th. One incident which must be regarded as very important to the Duke is nowhere referred to, but will be touched on anon.

In this same year (1856) the Duke succeeded Lord Hardinge as Commander-in-Chief of the Army. In regard to this he says :

" Thus I am placed in the proudest military position that any subject could be placed in. It is an onerous one, but I will do my best to do myself credit."

In the course of 1857 he received a letter from the Queen :

" In the midst of so much that is so important, I forgot a trifle, but still which I think ought not to be any longer overlooked. It is the *moustaches*, as regards the *men* and

*officers serving* (I don't mean any of the old Generals, etc., etc.), should no longer be *optional*, but ordered to be worn. The effect in the Ranks altogether is bad, when you see some with and some without them. I think this should *now* be done without delay. . . ."

The Chinese trouble and the Indian Mutiny both caused the Duke a good deal of anxiety during these years, but he dealt with them competently in so far as his office as Commander-in-Chief required him so to do. He comments on the relief of Lucknow in his Diary under the date of December 30th, 1857 :

" This is a very comforting event. . . ."

When, in 1858, it was decided that the Queen should pay a visit to Cherbourg, the Duke wished to be one of the party, and accordingly wrote to the Queen to that effect. She replied :

" . . . There will be no difficulty in your accompanying us, but I think you should not determine the length of your stay at Cherbourg without consulting the Ministers, who may think it desirable for you to stay longer. . . ."

This visit duly took place in August, and the Duke accompanied the Queen and returned with her, one of the party aboard the Royal yacht, *Victoria and Albert*.

On March 16th, 1860, the Duchess of Kent, Queen Victoria's mother, died. Under the date of the 17th, the Diary records :

" . . . Went to the Chapel Royal in the Royal Pew upstairs where I was told that the Queen had expressed a wish to see us (*himself and his mother*) at Windsor. . . . Saw the Queen and Albert. The Queen much affected, and greatly over-powered. Altogether the impression we had

from the interview was an agreeable one, however melancholy. . . ”

The Duke was soon to have experience of an even more melancholy occasion. 1861 was a dark year for the Royal House, and ended in an atmosphere of the deepest tragedy.

On December 8th the *Court Circular* informed the nation that the Prince Consort was suffering from a feverish cold, and on the 14th church-bells everywhere were tolling for his passing!

The end came with tragic suddenness. On the 13th Sir Charles Phipps, who had been keeping the Duke of Cambridge posted as to the progress of the Prince Consort's illness, wrote: “. . . Your Royal Highness will believe with what unspeakable grief I have to announce to you that the Prince Consort's illness has taken a very unfavourable appearance, and the doctors . . . are not without fear for the night. . . .” And his next one, dated the 14th, commences with: “. . . The most dreadful event that could, I believe, occur to this country has fallen upon it. My beloved master expired at ten minutes before eleven. . . .”

In his Diary the Duke writes :

“. . . December 14th: Went over to Windsor at 7.15 a.m. Found the Prince had got over the night, and was a shade better. . . . Did not see the Queen, but saw Alice, who has behaved beautifully throughout. At one o'clock in the morning was woken with the news that the Prince had expired very quietly at 11 o'clock. . . .”

On the 15th, he writes : “. . . It is impossible to realise as yet the blow that has so suddenly struck us. It is a fearful and awful calamity, and nobody can have an

idea of how great the loss must be to the poor dear Queen and to the country. . . . I attended Prayer in the Chapel (at Windsor) at 12, and saw the Queen for a moment. I found her fearfully affected, but still able to give vent to her feelings in a profusion of tears. She is behaving nobly in her heavy affliction. . . ."

The Duke was much affected by the Prince's death, and also, in that time of sorrow, was kept very busy in many ways. The result was that his health gave way, and what was at first thought to be a cold, affecting the nerves of the face, was afterwards diagnosed by Drs. Gibson and Illingworth as a slight attack of facial paralysis. Owing to this, H.R.H. was unable to attend the funeral of the Prince Consort.

During the early days of her bereavement the Queen remained in the strictest seclusion ; the Prince of Wales (afterwards Edward VII) went for a tour in the Far East, while the other children of the Queen were too young to undertake any public duties of importance. The result was that the public duties of the Duke of Cambridge became multifarious, and included the opening of the Great International Exhibition in South Kensington on May 1st, 1862.

The second Great Exhibition had been organized by the Prince Consort, and when he died the arrangements were too far advanced for it to be abandoned. One imagines it as a disagreeable task to the Duke for many reasons, but he performed it very successfully, supported by two foreign Princes—Fritz William, Prince of Prussia (and afterwards the German Emperor) and Prince Oscar of Sweden.

In November, 1862, came the Prince of Wales's twenty-first birthday, and early in the following year his marriage

to that Royal lady afterwards so much beloved in this country as Queen Alexandra.

On March 7th, the Royal pair arrived in London, and were formally received by the Duke. ". . . We rode to the Bricklayers Arms to be ready to receive the young couple on their arrival . . . the young couple alighted, Alix in great beauty. . . . I was most cordially received along the entire route. . . ."

On the 10th came the wedding ceremony :

" . . . The morning was fine, though a little foggy. . . . I drove down in the same carriage with the Bride and her Father, and was one of her supporters. She looked perfectly lovely. . . . The Queen was in the Royal Closet, but was seen by all—The Prince of Wales performed his part with infinite dignity and grace. . . ."

The years from 1862 to 1868 passed in a constant round of public duties, State ceremonials, etc. On November 29th, 1868, while the Duke was on his way to dinner in Queen Street, the horse in his brougham took fright and suddenly bolted down Hertford Street. In Curzon Street the Duke jumped out, and the animal was finally brought to a halt in Lansdowne Passage. Neither the Duke nor his coachman were injured, but it was a narrow escape.

Under the date of March 26th, 1869, the Duke records :

" Good Friday, and at the same time my 50th birthday, a very serious matter for reflection, though I have everything to be most grateful for. Still, years are creeping on fast, and one feels that one is getting older."

In 1870 came the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War. The Duke, always inclined to be anti-German, gave all his sympathies to France, and described the terms of the

Peace Treaty in his Diary as "extravagant" and "fearfully exacting."

In the autumn of 1873 came the Ashantee War, with Viscount (then Sir Garnet) Wolsey's dash for Coomassie. This campaign kept the Duke busy for some time.

In January, 1874, the Duke was accosted while walking in Pall Mall by a well-dressed stranger, who announced that he had seriously wronged him, after which he struck him on the chest. He was restrained by bystanders, but broke away and struck the Duke again. He was then given in charge, and proved to be a Captain Maunsell, who had an imaginary grievance against the Duke over a matter of promotion. The Duke had to give evidence against him at Marlborough Street before Mr. Newton, and notes in his Diary that Maunsell was evidently mad.

Queen Victoria wrote him on this incident, saying :

"... it is an atrocious thing, and the individual will, I hope, be proved mad and shut up. It reminds me of the assault on me at Cambridge House now 23 years ago!"

On May 23rd of the same year the Duke's mother returned to England from Strelitz, where she had been ill. She was still an invalid, but bore the journey well.

On May 12th, 1878, the King of Hanover died, and on December 14th of the same year the Princess Alice was carried off by a virulent attack of diphtheria, which greatly upset the Duke, who had always been very fond of her.

The period between 1879 and 1882 was packed with wars and rumours of wars, and the Duke concentrated on affairs concerning the Afghan, Zulu, and first South African campaigns.

In April of 1881 Lord Beaconsfield died. The Duke comments in his Diary :

“ . . . This is a dreadful blow to all right-thinking people in this country. . . . ”

This same year saw the demise of several of the Duke's most valued friends, including “ Jim ” Macdonald, an old Crimean comrade. The Duke was most upset, and attended the funeral in person.

In 1883 came the revolt of the Mahdi, and the Egyptian Campaign.

In November, 1886, Canon Wood, one-time the Duke's tutor, died. H.R.H. comments : “ . . . He is a friend of 58 years' standing, and was very dear and good to me. How many are passing away ! ”

Again the Duke attended the funeral in person, and laid a wreath from himself, and a floral cross from his mother, on the coffin of his old tutor.

The year 1887 marked an important epoch for the Duke, for it brought with it for him two Jubilees. The first, of course, was that of Queen Victoria, and of that great ceremony the Duke says, in his Diary :

“ *June 20* : At 12 I drove to Chelsea Hospital to unveil the Bust of the Queen in the Great Hall as a testimony of loyal devotion to the Queen from the old Veterans of the Hospital. I addressed a few words to the whole of the old men assembled. Dined at Buckingham Palace—a full dress dinner. The Queen dined with all the Royalties at a State Banquet, the Suites together downstairs. At the Queen's table were seated 69 Royalties in all.”

“ *June 21st* : The great Jubilee day, and an immense success. London was in the streets quite early in the morning, indeed during the whole previous night, and the weather was magnificent, bright sunshine with a cool breeze. I left my house riding Guardsman,  $\frac{1}{2}$  before 10, and rode with my staff to Buckingham Palace. The



MR. WALTER W. MCKEE, MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, OF THE UNITED KINGDOM



MR. RICHARD W. LADD, MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, OF THE UNITED KINGDOM



several processions started thence in succession, the Queen being the last to leave ; I riding by the side of her carriage. The streets were lined with troops the entire distance. The crowds were quite enormous and the enthusiasm throughout the entire route unbounded. Nothing could have been finer or more heartstirring. The Abbey was reached at 12.30, where the scene was touchingly magnificent. The return route was equally fine, and the enthusiasm overwhelming. We got back to Buckingham Palace without any incident or mishap by 2.30, where there was a great State Luncheon of Royalties in one room and suites in another. . . . Dined again at the Palace, another State Banquet."

" *June 22nd* : At 4 rode in the Park to attend the Queen when driving through the Children's Fête in Hyde Park, which was a great success. About 30,000 School Children attended, and there were crowds all along the road by which the Queen entered and left the Park, I, as Ranger, riding by the carriage in plain clothes. All went off admirably, and the weather was lovely and the children delighted. Went down in the evening and dined at Windsor with the Queen and the Royal Family. The Queen and the Royal Family dined in the Dining Room, and the Suites in the Waterloo Gallery. We afterwards saw from the windows of the corridor the torchlight procession of the Eton boys, which was beautifully organized and carried out. The boys sang, and then marched past Her Majesty, who went into the Quadrangle and thanked them for their loyalty. The whole evening finished by a very good display of fireworks from the Home Park."

" *June 23rd* : Went early by special train from Windsor to Farnborough with Arthur, Louis of Hesse

and his son, where at 10 we were joined by the Prince of Wales, Kings of Denmark and Greece, and a large number of Royalties, including William of Prussia, from London. The troops were in Parade order on the Steeple Cross Parade Ground, where they marched past admirably, and were beautifully turned out, and I think all the foreigners were pleased. There was afterwards a short field-day towards the Queen's Pavilion, which we reached soon after 2, and where we had a very nice luncheon given by the Queen. Returned to town by special train at 4. . . . I had my large dinner of 32 Royalties, King and Queen of the Belgians, Kings of Denmark and Greece, with 2 sons, 5 Waleses, 4 Strelitzes, Duchess of Edinburgh, Gr. Duke and Duchess Serge of Russia, Crown Prince of Sweden, Infanta (Eulalie) of Spain with husband, Dukes d'Aumale and Chartres, Prince and Princess Edward, F. Anhalt, Ernest of Hesse, Princess Frederica and Pawel von Rammingen, Augustus, A. Lennox, and self. . . ."

On the 28th the Duke went to Woolwich with "William of Prussia" and other Princes to witness a review of the Artillery. On July 2nd, with his personal and Headquarters Staff, the Duke witnessed a march-past of 24,000 Volunteers, at which the Queen and many foreign Royalties were present. On the 4th he attended the State Ceremonial of the Queen laying the foundation stone for the Imperial Institute at South Kensington. On the 9th, in his capacity of Commander-in-Chief, the Duke attended the great Jubilee Review at Aldershot, of which he was, of course, in command. In his Diary description of this ceremonial, the Duke writes :

" . . . The appearance of the Force was truly imposing and magnificent, and everything passed off well and without a hitch. The Queen arrived at 11.15 and was

received with a Royal Salute. I then rode up to the carriage, and handed to her the address of the Army, to which she returned a most gracious reply. There were three hearty cheers given for Her Majesty and then the march past commenced, the Infantry leading because of the great dust. The Cavalry and Artillery and the Auxiliary Departmental Corps followed, and after passing the Cavalry wheeled into line and advanced at a gallop, led by myself, a most imposing sight, the Artillery coming up in second time as the Cavalry advanced. The Queen then drove back through a double line of Infantry Columns, reaching as far as the Pavilion. We then lunched at the Pavilion, about one hundred sat down and it was well served. The Queen lunched alone with Alix and Beatrice. The Kings of Saxony and Greece, Dukes of Sparta and Braganza, and all the members of the Royal Family, including Augusta and Mary, were present and all seemed gratified. I took leave of the Queen, who seemed pleased and satisfied, changed to plain clothes at Alison's house, and returned to London by special train."

July 23rd was the date set aside for the great Naval Review at Spithead. He embarked on the *Osborne* at Portsmouth with the Duke of Braganza for Cowes, and on arrival there the Duke assumed his uniform as one of the Elder Brethren of Trinity House. At three o'clock the Queen arrived aboard the *Alberta*, and changed in Osborne Bay to the *Victoria and Albert*, in which vessel she moved up and down the grand line of men-o'-war. A general salute was fired, and the crew of each vessel cheered as the Royal yacht passed by.

The Duke himself gives a somewhat sparse account of the Naval Review, possibly because his chief and absorbing interest lay in the Army and not the Navy. But in

regard to all the events of this Jubilee Celebration, the Marquis of Lorne, in his book, *V.R.I., Her Life and Empire*, gives an interesting account.

" The two great services for the defence of the country had an opportunity of paying their tribute. Fifty-eight thousand men with 102 guns were reviewed at Aldershot, and a mighty fleet of 135 vessels with 500 guns and 20,000 officers and men saluted their Sovereign. The review of the sea forces was especially magnificent, for a fresh wind blew the great flags at the masts of each vessel squarely out, and the Royal yacht, taking a position at the close of the display off the eastern end of the Isle of Wight, saw the two great divisions rush past, the numbers being so great that the first vessels had become mere dark dots on the horizon when the last went by, flinging the foam of the blue waves from the sharp and perpendicular lines of their bows.

" At the Review of the troops at Aldershot the Duke of Cambridge, Commander-in-Chief, was on the field, and Lord Wolseley rode with him. The King of Saxony and the King of the Hellenes were also present. The Queen had slept at the Pavilion. The troops away from the Basingstoke Canal to the slopes of the hill called Cæsar's Camp. The Royal salute throughout the long line was given with magnificent precision. After the review the Duke of Cambridge spoke thus on behalf of the Army :

' Your Majesty's Army, including the Reserve Forces, approaches the throne, and offers its respectful homage and congratulations upon the completion of the fiftieth year of Your Majesty's reign, and begs your gracious acceptance of an offering to commemorate that happy event, and as a tribute of its love and devotion,

‘ During those fifty years the Army has been called upon to maintain the interests of the British Empire in every quarter of the globe. It is deeply grateful for the concern which Your Majesty has ever shown for its welfare in peace or war and in its history, and for Your Majesty’s sympathy for the widows and orphans, and those who have fallen in defence of the British flag.’

“ The Queen in reply said :—

‘ The loyal and dutiful expression of congratulations of my Army and Auxiliary Forces upon the completion of the fiftieth year of my reign is a source of deep satisfaction to me, and I accept with pleasure this tribute of love and devotion. Whenever, during that reign, I have had to call upon the Army to perform its duty in any part of the world, it has never failed to justify the confidence and earn the gratitude of myself and my people by its gallantry and self-devotion, and I have no doubt that, should the occasion unfortunately arise, I can rely with equal confidence upon the co-operation of my Auxiliary Forces.

‘ But however confident I may feel in the valour and endurance of my troops, there is no blessing which I, at this season, more earnestly ask Almighty God to extend to my people during the remainder of my reign than that of peace.’

“ A garden party given by the Queen in the grounds at Buckingham Palace terminated the London season.”

The second Jubilee, a rather more personal one so far as the Duke was concerned, occurred on November 7th, 1887, this being the fiftieth anniversary of the Duke’s entrance into the Army—His Military Jubilee. Of this he writes in his Diary :

“ . . . This is the Anniversary of my entering the Army fifty years ago. I have been overwhelmed by letters and telegrams of congratulation both from abroad and at home; also some very nice and affectionate presents, which have gratified me very much indeed. The Queen has also graciously appointed me from to-day her Commander-in-Chief by Patent, which office has been in abeyance since the death of the Duke of Wellington, as I have hitherto held the office of Commander-in-Chief by letters of service. . . . ”

In 1888 the German Emperor died. H.R.H. comments on this event as follows in his Diary :

“ March 9th : The German Emperor, whose health has been in a critical condition for some days, died this morning at 8.30—a very great man, and a powerful Sovereign—one less in this world—what events may not arise from this ! . . . ”

Those of us who were alive in 1914 know what *did* arise, and realise that the Duke of Cambridge was something of a prophet !

In 1889 H.R.H. took a short holiday on the Continent. Travelling *via* Barcelona and Marseilles, he went to Cannes, where he spent a fortnight. Soon after his return to England, his seventieth birthday occurred ; “ . . . which I look upon as a great advance in years, though personally I still feel equal to a great deal of exertion and fatigue, thank God.”

In April, 1889, the Duke was called upon to endure another blow from Fate. It was not an unexpected one, yet, from its final suddenness, must have come as a great shock to him.

On April 6th his mother, the Duchess of Cambridge,

died at St. James's Palace, and the great tragedy of it was that her son, who had loved her so devotedly for the whole of his life, was not able to be with her at the end.

He was, at the time, in Dublin, and while he was making an inspection of the troops at the Curragh, on April 6th, he received, simultaneously, two telegrams.

They were both from Lady Geraldine Somerset, who had for many years been Lady-in-Waiting to the Duchess. The first announced a change for the worse in the Duchess's health—and the second announced her death.

In his Diary the Duke says :

“ . . . but for her, dear precious darling, a happy release from prolonged sufferings. I little expected this just now, though I felt it could not be far distant at her advanced age, going on for 92 years. May God have mercy on her dear soul . . . ! ”

The blow was undoubtedly the most severe the Duke had yet received in the whole course of his seventy years of life, and was rendered all the more so by the fact that he was not able to be at his mother's bedside at the last.

Grief-stricken, he returned post-haste to London. At St. James's he found “ poor Lady Geraldine very calm and composed, though painfully sorrowing.”

He goes on to say :

“ I at once went to my dear mother's bedroom, and saw her dear face lying peacefully on her bed of death, a happy expression on her beloved countenance . . . attended a short, touching service by my beloved mother's bedside. The Wales's with their three daughters, Mary with her children, Geraldine, Mrs. Mitford, Greville,

Dolly and Sofia, Tosti,<sup>1</sup> and the servants being present, and the Sub-Dean, Mr. Sheppard, officiating. . . .”

Queen Victoria wrote a letter of sympathy, in which she said: “. . . I was so grieved that you and your sisters should not have had the consolation which I had of being with your beloved mother at the last! Though I was not recognised, which is a terrible thing, my dear mother’s hand was in mine to the last! . . .”

On April 13th the remains of the Duchess were laid to rest in the churchyard at Kew.

Later the Queen wrote another letter of sympathy to the Duke, in the course of which she said:

“. . . It is a sad and solemn feeling that there is no one above us any longer, and that *we* are now the *only old ones left*. . . .”

In accordance with a last wish of the Duchess the Queen granted to the Duke the use of Kew Cottage, where his mother had resided so long and so happily, for the rest of his life, which was a great satisfaction to him.

But Fate had still another cruel blow in store for the Duke. The loss of his mother was almost immediately followed by the one greater sorrow which could possibly occur to him—the death of his even more beloved wife.

Then Victoria’s words were really true: “. . . *we* are now the *only old ones left*.”

<sup>1</sup> The Wales’s—Prince and Princess of Wales, later King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra; Mary—Duchess of Teck; Geraldine—Lady Somerset; Dolly and Sofia; Rear-Admiral Sir Adolphus and Lady FitzGeorge, the Author’s cousins; Tosti—the famous Italian composer.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE DEATH OF MRS. FITZGEORGE

THE paucity of any sort of details about the domestic life of the Duke and his wife, who was compelled, owing to the action of Queen Victoria in utterly ignoring her existence for so many years, to be known as plain "Mrs. FitzGeorge," is little short of incredible.

Although the Queen's attitude was what it was, the Duke and his wife did not lead a lonely or isolated life in the establishment that he set up for her in Queen Street. Despite the fact that the Duke ran a bachelor establishment at Gloucester House and entertained there officially, Queen Street was his real home.

But few of the select circle of friends, which included Mr. Gladstone and many other notabilities of the time, who were all delighted to be entertained at Queen Street, and were very sincere and genuine admirers of their beautiful hostess (Kingston says: "All who knew her fell under the charm of her radiant personality—not as the Duke of C.'s wife. . . .") have left any record of the many pleasant hours they must have spent in her drawing-room.

It would almost seem that fear of incurring the displeasure of Queen Victoria by having anything to do with "the actress-woman" kept them from leaving any record of their visits—and even the Diaries of the Duke

himself, *as published*, contain no references to his wife, except at the period just preceding her death. Although, now and again, there are such entries as : “ . . . As I was driving to Queen Street for dinner . . . ” and “ on my way home to Queen Street . . . ”

Be that as it may, this much is quite certain—that the Duke and Mrs. FitzGeorge enjoyed fifty years of full and almost idyllically happy married life, and that every moment of time which H.R.H. could spare from his official and social duties was spent at Queen Street with his wife, Louisa.

In the obituary notice on Mrs. FitzGeorge, which appears in the *Daily Telegraph* of January 14th, 1890, the writer says :

“ . . . In any other country the lamented lady would have received a title, and would have been widely known ; but in England there is no proneness to new departures<sup>1</sup> and therefore the position of Mrs. FitzGeorge was one scarcely without difficulty or disadvantage. But so considerable were her natural grace and dignity, so marked her tact and intelligence, her experience and judgment, that she easily surmounted any of the inconveniences that may have lain in her path through life. . . . ”

The passage italicized above demonstrates admirably the sycophantic attitude adopted in regard to this affair by historians, contemporary biographers and certain sections of the Press.

There was no question of a “ new departure ” in the matter of the marriage of Prince George and Miss Fairbrother. In the same year (1840) the Duke of Sussex pressed the Queen to recognize his marriage to Lady Cecilia Underwood. A Press agitation arose. *The Times*,

<sup>1</sup> Italic inserted

the *Standard*, and the *Morning Post*—all Tory papers, and therefore anti-Court—did not hesitate to openly declare that he hoped, if his marriage were recognized, to claim and receive an extra £6,000 per annum from Parliament.

There were outspoken and virulent attacks on the Duke of Sussex, such as would make Fleet Street shudder to-day, and most certainly made the Queen shudder at the time.

In justice to her it must be pointed out that this may have made her all the less willing to sanction Prince George's marriage. *But why did she give Lady Cecilia Buggin the courtesy title of Duchess of Inverness, and sometimes receive her at Court, while she completely ignored Prince George's marriage, and deliberately and persistently boycotted Mrs. FitzGeorge . . . ?*

That Mrs. FitzGeorge's path, subsequent to the marriage, was not an easy one to follow, may be gathered from the tone of a character-sketch of her contained in George Vandenhoff's book of reminiscences, *Leaves from an Actor's Notebook* (published in 1860), which appears therein under the title of "The Columbine":

" . . . She (Miss Fairbrother) has for some years been withdrawn from the stage, and lives under the protection of His Royal Highness the Duke of —. She has, by her royal lover, several children remarkable for their beauty—worthy of the beautiful race from which they spring. The lady's position is peculiar. A Royal Duke is under very binding restrictions as to marriage and is expected to receive his wife at the State's hands; but the (quasi) Duchess is treated with every consideration and respect; has a handsome house and elegant villa, carriages, retinue and attendants. So that Miss F—

is probably as happy as ever she dreamed of being as Columbine in the impossible bliss of the last scene of a Christmas Pantomime, where the good fairy unites the faithful lovers amidst a profusion of garlands and a general illumination. . . .”

There is a certain vein of spitefulness underlying this sketch which rather gives credence to a rumour that, just before the Duke made her acquaintance, Vandenhoff himself was an unsuccessful suitor for the affection of the beautiful Miss Fairbrother.

An old playbill of Covent Garden for that year contains his name (his stage-name was John Brougham) as well as hers, and those of Charles Matthews (Lessee), Wm. Farren, Mrs. Nisbett, Mrs. Glover, and Madame Vestris.

Be that as it may, several statements embodied in his memoir are not precisely correct. She was not, for instance, “under the protection” of the Duke in the ordinarily accepted sense of the term, but was married to him.

Louisa FitzGeorge was always as modest as she was beautiful, and it is to her credit that she never in any way tried to force her position upon Society, or attempted to make any sort of capital, socially or otherwise, out of her marriage to the Duke.

Kingston, in his *Famous Morganatic Marriages*, says: “. . . Mrs. F—— kept out of Court circles and intrigue. . . . She had her own circle of select friends. . . .”

The *Daily Telegraph*, in the course of her obituary notice on January 14th, 1890, remarks that: “. . . her small circle of devoted friends were persistent in their visits and inquiries. Those could easily understand from the strength of her character and her knowledge of the

world how, whilst she never sought to make many new friends, *she never lost an old friend*<sup>1</sup> and there were few more enjoyable hours for a small coterie of well-known persons than those they spent in her bright and interesting home. Her handsome features, her well-preserved figure, her ready perception and wide acquaintance with all current subjects of interest and her vivid remembrance of all the incidents of her peaceful life will live long in the minds of those who knew her well. . . ."

One wit of the day is said to have remarked, apropos of Mrs. FitzGeorge's intimate circle :

" Queen Street has the cream of Court and Society—Queen Victoria has to put up with the skim-milk as well ! "

In the years following the marriage this situation must have been very galling to Queen Victoria, especially if, as seems likely, she was mainly actuated by jealousy in her unreasonable attitude towards Mrs. FitzGeorge. Once the Duke had defied her wishes and gone through with the marriage, Mrs. FitzGeorge did not exist ! But that womanly curiosity in which she was by no means deficient would certainly have caused her to keep *au fait* with what went on at Queen Street, and in her private moments it must have caused her a great deal of annoyance—especially in that, during all those years, Mrs. FitzGeorge was never once guilty of any suggestion of conduct that could, in the slightest degree, justify the Queen's contemptuous description of her as "that actress-woman."

She must have been both puzzled and piqued by the fact that, despite her own definite boycott of Mrs. FitzGeorge, most of the best people in Court and Social

<sup>1</sup> It lies inserted.

life should so readily accept her ; that people like Mr. Gladstone should risk (and incur) the Royal displeasure by eagerly becoming, and remaining, intimate with her, and that all these should treat her as what she really was—the loved wife of a Royal Prince.

There is no doubt that in the strange and subtle beneath-the-surface struggle between the Lady Royal and the lady commoner, the latter won—and at that without any apparent attempt to do so.

When, comparatively early in their married life, the Duke went to the Crimea, Mrs. FitzGeorge remained modestly in the background to fret and worry like other wives, no doubt, but without any display of her emotions. But when the Duke was taken ill out there she immediately and unhesitatingly did what few other wives of British soldiers would have done—she went out to that land of hardship, death, and desolation, and nursed him herself !

The feelings of the Queen, when she heard of this, must have been very mixed.

It was many a long year before the two women at last met, and then the *rencontre* was arranged at the instigation of the Queen, curiosity having, apparently, at long last triumphed over all other emotions, and the Duke's old prophecy when he first mentioned his proposed marriage to her ("... *You will change your mind about her in five minutes . . . !*") was fully justified.

Apropos of this incident, Mr. Kingston relates it as follows :

"... Not for years did the Queen receive her cousin's wife ; she knew of the happy marriage ; she was astonished that Society should acknowledge her ; piqued that she should be treated as the wife of a Royal Prince. And the ex-actress had done this on her own, for her

husband's plain-speaking and blunt manner were proverbial. Out of curiosity Queen Victoria at last decided that she must or would see this strange actress-wife. A meeting was arranged in the drawing-room of a duchess who was the Queen's intimate friend. The two women met as ordinary women do. The morganatic wife loved her husband and children; so also the Queen. It had been intended that the meeting should last not more than a quarter of an hour. But it was actually two hours before H.M. summoned a lady-in-waiting, who noted that the Queen and Mrs. FitzGeorge had been deeply affected by their heart-to-heart talk. Mrs. FitzGeorge captured the Queen's affection at once, and with it her respect . . . the Queen admitted that she had been too severe in the past. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

It seems that foreign visitors to London were somewhat mystified in the matter of Mrs. FitzGeorge. They beheld a very charming lady, said to be the wife of a Prince Royal, yet officially without title or precedence—in spite of which noblemen and peeresses rose when she entered a room, and treated her with Royal honours !

However, the majority of them had the good sense to put it down as another strange foible of the “mad English,” and to accept it without question.

But some, less tactful and more ill-mannered, made this un-understandable situation an excuse for taking liberties. And the Duke showed little mercy to such.

We have it on the authority of Mr. Kingston that one young princeling of Mecklenberg-Schwerin showed disrespect to Mrs. FitzGeorge at dinner. Without warning or hesitation the Duke pounced on him, took him by the collar, ran him to the front-door, and flung him out into

<sup>1</sup> *Famous Morganatic Marriages.*

Piccadilly ! When formal complaint of this piece of direct action was made to Queen Victoria, she replied coldly that she never interfered in private quarrels.

William I, Emperor of Germany, took the line adopted by Queen Victoria in those earlier days (could he have been instigated by her ?) and persistently ignored the Duke's marriage, openly regarding him as a likely suitor for the hand of one or another of the many German princesses. Finally the Duke lost his temper over this :

Says Mr. Kingston, describing the incident :

" His wealth of invective nearly paralysed the Emperor. In bluntest terms he described Germans in general, Prussians in particular, and Teutonic princesses in detail. No gentleman, he stormed, would ever advise another to desert a lady to whom he had pledged his word in the sight of God and man. He wound up with a comparison between his wife and the type of princess that the Emperor wished him to marry. . . ."

One conceives that the comparison was not precisely flattering to the latter !

The Duke always had a definite dislike and distrust of Germans, and this lends point to another incident described by Mr. Kingston in his book. It seems that the young Prince William (now the ex-Kaiser of Germany) was in London in 1885, by which year Mrs. FitzGeorge was already a confirmed invalid. He rather condescendingly inquired of the Duke about his wife's health, and said that " if it would gratify her he might find time to visit her."

" I am afraid, Willie," was the reply, " that my wife will not be able to spare the time to receive you. . . . She only sees intimate friends ! But I will tell her you inquired ! "

And with a curt nod the Duke walked away, leaving the Prince standing.

About four years after this the Prince, now actually the Kaiser, drove up to the Queen Street residence in his State carriage, "so that Mrs. FitzGeorge could see what an Emperor was like."

"My wife cannot see you!" said the Duke, firmly. "She is not well enough. Permit me to escort you to your carriage!"

And he watched, with a grim smile, the departure of a snubbed Emperor.

But the time was approaching when even the grimmest of smiles would be wiped from his face for many weary months, for on January 12th, 1890, his beloved wife passed away, and he, after fifty years of almost ideally happy married life, was left a lonely man indeed.

Mrs. FitzGeorge had endured a very long and painful illness with a bravery and stoical fortitude well in keeping with the strength and beauty of her character, and throughout it all her greatest desire was always to keep the knowledge of her sufferings as much as possible from the Duke.

On January 8th, the anniversary of their wedding day, which, as the Duke notes: ". . . we have always kept together" she rallied slightly, and on the following day was able to take the Sacrament, which was administered by the Rev. Edgar Sheppard. Says the Duke's Diary:

". . . Dearest Louisa appeared stronger and better and was able to keep her dear eyes open, which she could not do the last few days. She rejoiced at taking the Holy Communion with myself. . . ."

But on the next day Mrs. FitzGeorge became unconscious again, and died peacefully some forty-eight hours later.

*The Diary, dated January 12th, 1890:* "My beloved wife breathed her last, calmly, peacefully, softly, at about 4 this morning. . . . All her children, as well as myself, the nurse, dear Rowelly, and the female servants were surrounding the deathbed, a peaceful gathering of devotedly mourning and affectionate hearts . . . later on I received a most affectionate message from Her Majesty which I highly appreciate, and *which would have been such a joy to my beloved one had she known the fact.*<sup>1</sup> . . . My beloved one lay lovely in death still amongst us. Her countenance was beautiful, quite young to look at, though 74 in actual age. The sorrow of my heart has this consolation that my beloved wife is now at peace and rest after her terrible and very prolonged sufferings . . . my little home of 50 years with my beloved Louisa is now come to an end. . . ."

(Dated January 14th.) "To Queen Street, and had a last look at my beloved wife, now beautifully laid out in the shell of the coffin, so calm and placid and quite young in the face, nothing painful about it, my bracelet on her dear arm which she always wore and which she will take with her to the grave. . . ."

There was little of the poet in the make-up of the Duke, but in these lines, penned in the moment of his great sorrow, there is poetic beauty. They are a great tribute to the memory of a very good and beautiful lady, and the most definite and positive proof that the Duke made no mistake when he defied the wishes of his Queen and married according to the dictates of his heart.

<sup>1</sup> Italics inserted.

## CHAPTER XXI

### AFTERMATH

THE funeral took place on the 16th, at Kensal Green Cemetery, where the Duke had, some years previously, purchased a piece of ground "where I propose to be laid myself by her dear side. . . ."

The service in the cemetery chapel was conducted by the Sub-Dean, Mr. Sheppard. The friends of Mrs. FitzGeorge and the Duke attended in large numbers, and there was also a large number of the public present, all showing signs of the greatest grief and respect.

Later the will was read at Queen Street. The majority of her property, jewellery, etc., was divided amongst her three sons, with the Duke and Mr. Bateson as executors.

The obituary notices in the newspapers were all couched in the most respectful terms.

*The Times* of January 14th, 1890, says :

" . . . Before her marriage Miss Farebrother was an accomplished actress. During his (the Duke's) illness after Inkerman, she went out to the Crimea to nurse him. It is stated that during Mrs. FitzGeorge's long and painful illness the Queen has sent to make frequent inquiries at her residence in Queen Street, Mayfair. . . ."

Mr. Edward Lawson,<sup>1</sup> then editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, was a personal friend of Mrs. FitzGeorge's,

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards the first Lord Burnham.

and was amongst the mourners at the funeral. The articles in the *Telegraph* at this time, which were doubtless either written or inspired by him personally, have already been quoted, but two extracts are worthy of notice here :

Under the date of January 14th: ". . . In his grief the Duke of Cambridge will have the sympathy not only of the Royal Family, but of the country he has served so well."

And on January 17th: "The story of the Duke of Cambridge's fifty years' devotion to Mrs. FitzGeorge brought thousands of people to the simple funeral at Kensal Green. The inscription on the coffin reads :

‘*LOUISA FITZGEORGE,*  
*the Beloved Wife of*  
*H.R.H. The Duke of Cambridge,*  
*Died 12th January, 1890.*  
*Aged 74 Years.’”*

The other obituary notices were couched in much the same terms. All of them were highly respectful; most of them eulogistic—the fact being that ever since her marriage to the Duke, Mrs. FitzGeorge's conduct and behaviour had been such as to arouse the admiration of everyone who either knew her or knew of her.

The Duke's Diary of January 17th contains the following infinitely pathetic entry :

“. . . The loneliness of my position becomes more marked to me every hour of the day. It is a terrible blow, which even now I have hardly realized. Public opinion all most respectful to her memory, and sympathetic to me in my sorrow. . . .”



AT THE WEDDING OF MISS MELLÈNE HOUDEN SISTER OF LADY  
FITZGEORGE TO MR LOUIS MITCHELL  
The two small bridesmaids are the author (taller) and Miss Olga FitzGeorge, grand-  
daughter of the Duke of Cambridge



And, again, on the 23rd :

" . . . To Queen Street to take affectionate leave of the dear old house where I have spent so many, many happy years of my life with my beloved wife, including the poor dear room in which she died. It overwhelmed me with grief and sorrow. . . ."

As quickly as might be; the Duke made such arrangements as were necessary to enable him to get out of London and England as soon as possible—away from the haunts of sad memories.

He went to the South of France for a time, and while there he made an entry in his Diary which tells most eloquently of the terrible gap left in his life by the death of Mrs. FitzGeorge.

" How I miss her ! It is indescribable, and nothing more so at this moment when absent than not hearing from or writing to her daily as has always been our habit since we first met. . . ."

From which it will be seen that his trip abroad did little to assuage the Duke's grief, but merely served to bring home his loss in a different way.

How strange it is to find that this romance of Royal Duke and Actress, which forms one of the sweetest and most delightful Royal romances in the whole of English history, is to-day so little known.

The reason for this is because, from the moment Queen Victoria put her veto on the marriage, a strange conspiracy of silence has seemed to grow up round the very name of Louisa FitzGeorge—and this in spite of the love and respect which she inspired in all who knew her, and despite the fact that, towards the latter part of her life,

she and the Queen became reconciled—if such a term may be used about those who never quarrelled.

In all the official, and practically all the unofficial, histories of the time, and in the biographies of the famous persons concerned with the period, the marriage of the Duke of Cambridge is, as though by some mutual arrangement, tacitly ignored. There must, one would think, have been much illuminating and interesting data contained in references to her in the Duke's Diaries—but if so they have been rigidly suppressed by Canon Sheppard, who, in editing the Diaries, restricts his whole commentary on the Duke's wife of fifty years standing to a mere three pages, and does not mention her at all until the chronological progress of his book arrives at the period of her death. And then he dismisses her with a curt: “One quotation more, and we will leave the subject of Mrs. FitzGeorge's death. . . .” And this, be it noted, was the gentleman who was her spiritual adviser; who gave her her last Communion; and who, as the Duke notes in his Diary (writing of him as “dear Mr. Sheppard”), read the burial service over her remains “most beautifully!”

Mr. Buckle, editing the *Letters of Queen Victoria*, has evidently most carefully suppressed all letters (and there must surely have been quite a number) having any reference to Mrs. FitzGeorge, including even that letter of sympathy which the Duke mentions having received immediately after her death. And even Mr. Lytton Strachey, in his singularly outspoken *Queen Victoria*, does not mention the marriage at all!

One cannot help asking: “Why . . . ?”

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE LAST PHASE

UNDER the date of March 26th, 1890, we find another reference to his late wife in the Duke's Diary, when he says :

“ . . . My 71st birthday! A sad day for me, in remembrance of so many past happy days, now gone for ever, with my beloved wife and my dear old mother. . . . ”

He was by this time back in England, with all outward signs of his abiding grief bravely put away, and plainly endeavouring to soften the pangs of memory by a constant round of duties—laying foundation stones, attending the Queen at unveiling ceremonies, entertaining foreign royalties and notabilities, and so on.

Some indication of the Duke's multifarious activities may be found in the diaries of this period. Thus :

“ *May 4th, (1890) : Dined at Marlborough House to welcome Eddy (the Duke of Clarence) on his safe return from India. He looks thin and tired. . . .* ”

“ *May 8th : At 3 went to St. Paul's Cathedral as Royal Steward for the year for the Sons of the Clergy Corporation—a very fine choral service, with the addition of a large choir and orchestra. Dined with the Corporation at Merchant Taylors' Hall in the evening.* ”

“ *May 12th : Went to Windsor by special train with King of the Belgians, Prince of Wales, and others to the* ”

Castle in uniform. Lunched with the Queen, and then in State procession drove to Smith's Lawn for the Queen's unveiling the statue by Boehm of the Prince Consort, presented to the Queen as the Jubilee gift of the Women of England. I think it very fine. There were detachments present of all the regiments of which the Prince Consort was Colonel-in-Chief. . . ."

"*May 19th*: Went to Chatham with the Prince of Wales to unveil the statue of General Charles Gordon, erected in front of the Royal Engineers Institute by the Corps in general. . . . The Prince of Wales made an exceedingly nice speech. . . ."

"*May 20th*: To the London Hospital to lay the foundation stone of an extension of the buildings and Medical School, which went off very well. I had, of course, to reply to an address which was made me by the Chairman of Committees. . . ."

"*May 23rd*: To Buckingham, to inspect the Buckinghamshire Yeomanry, well commanded by Lord Chesham."

"*July 12th*: To Waterloo Station, where the Prince and Princess inspected the 19th Yorkshire Regiment, which bears her name, and which is to-day returning to Portsmouth. We then went down to Bisley, the new Shooting Ground of the National Rifle Association. Lord Wantage received us, I read an address to the Prince, to which he replied, and Alix fired the first shot on the new ranges, which are admirably constructed and are very numerous."

From this it will be seen that the Duke led a by no means idle life.

In the autumn the Duke paid a visit to Germany, where he took the opportunity of making himself better

acquainted with the 28th Regiment of Infantry, of which the German Emperor had made him an Honorary Colonel during a past visit to England.

From Germany the Duke proceeded to Brussels, where he unveiled a monument in commemoration of the Battle of Waterloo, in the cemetery of Evère. On this occasion the Duke made a speech which caused something of a sensation, and which everyone agreed was entirely felicitous, on the heroes who had given their lives in that great battle.

He concluded this speech by saying :

“ In recalling the names of Hougoumont, Quatre Bras, and Waterloo, where these soldiers gave up their lives for their country, it is with deepest satisfaction that I am able to say that the hostile feelings which once animated the two great nations, France and England, have long since passed away, so that now no other memory animates us save respect for the gallant foes there engaged.”

He was back in England for Christmas—the first since the death of his wife. Of it he writes in his Diary :

“ . . . This is a sad time of year for me, so many recollections of dear ones that have passed away about this time. Last year I was in great anxiety about dear Louisa, though I had no idea that her end was so near at hand, and I made up my mind not to keep this Christmas at all ; it was too painful for me. . . . ”

On December 30th the Duke left England for Paris, Italy, and Malta. In Paris he writes :

“ . . . I mourn her loss from the depths of my heart, and her loss to me is so irreparable that I shall ever look back with sorrow to 1890, the year when she, my beloved one, was taken from amongst us. . . . ”

And in Spezia, on January 11th, he says :

" My thoughts were entirely absorbed all the evening with the sad recollections of last year, for *this* was the night that my beloved wife Louisa passed away from amongst us. Oh, *how* I deplore her loss. . . . No words can express the intense sorrow that oppresses and depresses my heart. . . ."

The Duke was back in London in time to attend officially, with the Prince of Wales, the opening of the Naval Exhibition.

On July 4th, he received the German Emperor at the South Western Station, and conducted him to Windsor Castle, where the Queen awaited his arrival at the State entrance.

During this visit the Duke arranged a special Military Review for the Emperor, in regard to which the latter received a congratulatory letter, in the course of which the Kaiser said :

" . . . I still remember with unalloyed pleasure the magnificent sight on Wimbledon Common last year. It was the greatest treat you could have imagined for me, and splendidly done. . . ."

Early in 1892 the Duke sustained a further family loss in the sad death of the Duke of Clarence, the popular "Prince Eddy," who had but just become engaged to Princess May of Teck, the Duke's niece. H.R.H. was on the Riviera when the news reached him, and was greatly upset by it.

This death was very shortly followed by that of the Grand Duke of Hesse, yet another blow to the Royal Family.

In March, 1893, the Duke was in Spain, and there met King Alfonso as a child, of whom he writes in his Diary :

“ . . . Saw the little King and his sisters, extremely nice children, and so well brought up.”

1894 saw the birth of a son to the Duke and Duchess of York—the infant who was to be later Prince of Wales, King of England, and who is now the Duke of Windsor. Of this event the Duke writes :

“ . . . saw the boy baby, a very nice, healthy-looking child, 8 pounds in weight. . . . ”

The Diary of May 19th, 1895, contains the following momentous entry :

“ Had a lengthened conversation with Campbell-Bannerman on a wish expressed that I should, before the end of this year, retire from my command of the Army with a view to great changes being made at the War Office. This decision has filled me with the very greatest sorrow as I still feel quite equal to the performance of my duties, and never anticipated such a decision being come to without my willing consent, but I must submit as best I can to the inevitable, but I own that I am disgusted with this, to my mind, most unjustifiable proceeding, though Mr. C-B was most amiable in all he said. . . . ”

On May 21st the announcement of the Duke's retirement was made in the House, and immediately afterwards the Government were defeated by a majority of seven on a War Office Estimate. Campbell-Bannerman, being censured, immediately tendered his resignation.

The Duke received an amazing number of letters and telegrams from all classes of people, monarchs, and market-gardeners, peers and potmen, testifying signally to

his great popularity. The pick of them may be found published in Colonel Willoughby Verner's *Military Life* of the Duke.

Queen Victoria, whose relations with the Duke seem to have been far easier and more genuinely affectionate since the death of his wife, softened the blow as much as she could. She appointed him to the office of her First Personal Aide-de-Camp, with the right of attending her on all military occasions, and of holding the Parade on her birthday.

In August the Duke conducted his final official inspections. What might have been a very melancholy round was transformed into a triumphant progress by the conduct of the men he inspected, who cheered him with wild enthusiasm. Officers, and men alike, did everything in their power to show their admiration and appreciation of him.

The final inspection took place at Southsea on October 4th, 1895, and on the 31st H.R.H. made his speech of farewell at the Horse Guards, followed by a dinner at his house to all his old Horse Guards staff. This included two famous Generals-to-be—Sir Redvers Buller and Sir Evelyn Wood. The Queen wrote :

“... It is with much pain that I see you leave the high, important and responsible office which you have held for nearly 40 years. Accept also my sincerest thanks for the great services you have rendered to the Country, to the Army and myself, which will ever be most gratefully remembered. . . .”

So, amid a continuous round of dinners, banquets, speeches, letters, and honours from foreign countries, the Duke, at the age of 76, retired from his Chieftainship of the British Army.

His enforced retirement was another sad blow for the Duke, and it spelled the beginning of the end.

That that end was not reached even more quickly is due, undoubtedly, to the fact that the Duke remained very active in such fields as were left to him—and these were many. Ceremonial missions abroad, politics, diplomacy, charitable works, and any duties which the Queen might relegate to him, he carried out with meticulous thoroughness.

In 1896 came a minor crisis in South African affairs, with the Jameson Raid, and the Duke plainly foresaw that the ultimate outcome would be war. He had also foreseen, for a number of years, the inevitability of that eventual struggle with Germany which so shook the whole world in 1914.

In that year the Duke went to Cairo, a journey which appeared to be a mere pleasure trip, but which was actually a great deal more, with considerable political significance underlying it, as is indicated by the Queen's letter congratulating him on "the most excellent effect" which his visit had produced.

On June 22nd, 1897, came the glad pageantry of the Diamond Jubilee, when once more H.R.H. rode at the Queen's side—on the left-hand of her carriage—mounted on his old charger "Rifleman." Of it he says :

"... It was the most glorious and notable day and Ceremony I was ever present at, and the effect will, I think, be prodigious for good throughout the world. . . ."

In 1898 came the assassination of the Empress of Austria, and the death of the Duke's cousin, the Queen of Denmark, both events which shocked and grieved him.

In 1899, at the age of 79, the Duke paid a visit to the

French Fleet, anchored off Villefranche. And towards the end of that same year the war which he had foreseen with the Dutch Republic in South Africa broke out.

The Duke was one of the few military experts who realized, in the very beginning, that this war was going to be no afternoon tea-party and knew how inadequate were our preparations at home.

With the declaration of war the soldier in him stirred once more ! From the outset he flung himself into it with the utmost zest and energy, and from then until 1902 he was active in every possible way, and did all and more than any veteran of his age could be expected to do. No day was too long, no task too arduous.

He was in Paris in January, 1901, when news reached him of the serious illness of his cousin, Queen Victoria. On the 22nd he hurried home, only to learn, on reaching Charing Cross, that the Queen had passed away. His Diary records :

“ . . . It is a fearful blow and a great catastrophe, not only for England, but for the world at large. . . . ”

On the 24th the Duke took the oath of allegiance to King Edward VII at the House of Lords. On the 27th he records a meeting with the Royal Family at Osborne :

“ . . . It was a very sad meeting . . . had a long talk with Queen Alexandra, who, as well as the King and all of them, were most sympathetic and affectionate. . . . ”

On February 2nd, came the funeral and so, for the last time, the old Duke rode through the streets in attendance upon his Queen and cousin. . . . “ I rode with the King and Emperor (of Germany) behind the hearse. . . . After that I returned to London (from Windsor) by 7 o'clock,

being dead beat, and I just crawled into bed. (*Feb. 5th*) : At 3 drove to Marlborough House to take leave of the Emperor, who was most affectionate and gracious to me. . . ."

On June 1st, 1902, peace was declared in South Africa, and it seems likely that with the passing of that campaign, the Duke's hold on life sensibly slackened.

The sudden illness of the King with appendicitis, and the consequent postponement of the Coronation, shook him very badly. He feared that he would not live to see Edward crowned after all.

But he did, and so was privileged to attend one more great National Ceremonial—though on this occasion, perhaps for the first time since childhood, he drove in a carriage instead of riding on his charger.

The occasion is recorded in his Diary as follows :

"*August 7th* : Drove to Buckingham Palace to pay His Majesty my respects. He received me most amiably and graciously and I found him looking remarkably well and he moved about the room much as usual. He is certainly a most marvellous man for vigour and strength of will, and talked cheerfully on all subjects. (*9th*) : Coronation Day. The day was dry, but not bright, rather dull all the morning. Drove to Buckingham Palace in my own carriage at 9.30, where I got out to go with the Royal Family in procession to the Abbey. I drove in the first carriage with Princess Frederica, the Duchess of Albany and her daughter Alice and young Fred. The ceremony in the Abbey was quite magnificent. All went off without the slightest hitch or smallest trouble. It is all recorded in the books issued on the occasion. The King and Queen did their part in a most admirable manner. I did not get home till 4, when I got some

luncheon and lay down, being very tired, and I remained in bed the rest of the day. . . . ”

It is very noticeable how, during his latter years, the entries in the Duke's Diary in regard to great events tend to grow shorter and more terse ; as it is how, from the time of his wife's death onwards, very little emotion is indicated by his notes. It would almost seem as though the loss of the woman he had loved so devotedly and unswervingly over such a long period of time, took the keenness off the edge of his interest in life, just as the terrible grief that racked him at the time of her death came near to drying up the founts of his emotional capacity.

The Duke spent his last birthday (his 84th) in Cannes, and records the day as follows :

“ Cannes. March 26th, 1903 ; My 84th birthday, a great age to have attained with comparative health and strength to support it, for which I ought to be extremely grateful. Drove to the Reserve where Sir Edward Lawson gave a large luncheon in honour of the day to 30 people, chiefly lady friends. . . . He gave my health in a neat little speech. . . . ”

Towards the end of 1903 the Duke's strength was obviously failing, but he fought manfully against showing any sign of it, and did his utmost to continue his busy and active life.

Thus, in June and July, 1903, he : Presided at a meeting of the Soldiers' Daughters' Home ; dined at the 3rd Guards Club Dinner ; officially attended (in uniform) the King's birthday ; dined with the Prince of Wales and the Elder Brethren of the Trinity at Trinity House ; drove to Hurlingham to see a polo match ; presided at the Trocadero Restaurant over a meeting of the National

Rifle Association; attended a Requiem Service at Brompton Oratory for the late Pope.

In August he paid what was destined to be his last visit to Germany, and to his beloved Rumpenheim, returning to England in September, after paying a round of visits to intimate friends.

In the Diary for October 6th comes the first definite hint of the approaching end, when he writes :

“ I find it so difficult now to keep up my diary that I regret to say I must give it up, but age tells so much now upon me that I have no alternative. Thus ends my diary. I give it up with reluctance and great regret. I possibly might carry on a little longer, and I will try to do so, at all events for a little longer.”

He did manage to carry on for about a month, though rather vaguely and scrappily. Very near the end appears a painfully prophetic entry :

“ *31st October. . . . The shooters went early, and I started by 12.15. This is the last day I shall have the shooting<sup>1</sup> and a very pleasant and enjoyable time I have had of it, but alas ! All now is of the past.*”

And the last entry of all comes on November 5th, when, by a habit of nearly fifty years standing, he recalled that stirring 5th November at Inkerman :

“ *5th November. Inkerman Day ! How many remembrances come to one's mind of this day 49 years ago.*”

And those are the last words the Duke ever wrote in his Diary.

Gradually the Duke withdrew from Society—very gradually. Near the end of February, 1904, he was compelled to postpone a visit to Brighton owing to

<sup>1</sup> *Italic inserted*

indisposition. After that daily bulletins in relation to his health were issued, but none of them were of a grave or alarming nature until the one of March 16th, which announced a serious relapse.

Internal haemorrhage set in, and at about 4 a.m. on March 17th the Duke relapsed into unconsciousness. At 10.30 of the same morning, in the presence of his three sons, his grand-daughter, Mrs. Hamilton, Mr. Fuller, his medical attendant, and the Rev. Edgar Sheppard, he went peacefully out on the long journey which, as he so devoutly hoped and believed, would end in his being reunited for ever to the lady he had loved so truly.

So died a Prince and a very gallant gentleman, of high and noble mind and of absolute sincerity.

He was deeply mourned by all who had had personal contact with him, from H.M. King Edward and his family, to the servants who had waited upon him, and the private soldiers who had served under him.

For four days his body lay at Gloucester House, where, on March 21st, a short service was held by the Sub-Dean, Dr. Sheppard, in the State Dining Room, at which were present the King and Queen, the Prince and Princess of Wales, Princess Victoria, Prince and Princess Charles of Denmark, the Duke and Prince Arthur of Connaught, the Duke and Duchess of Teck, Prince Francis, the Prince and Princess Alexander of Teck, the Grand Duke of Mecklenberg-Strelitz, and the members of the late Duke's family and household.

Afterwards the coffin was removed to Westminster Abbey, where it was guarded all night by men of the Grenadier Guards.

The funeral service took place in the Abbey the following day—a ceremony of great grandeur and solemnity, with King Edward VII himself as Chief

Mourner, and representatives of every foreign State of any note in attendance. The pall bearers were all officers who had been associated with the Duke during his long military career, and consisted of five Field-Marshalls: Lord Wolseley, Sir F. Haynes, Sir Henry Norman, Lord Roberts, and Sir Evelyn Wood; seven Generals—Sir F. Stephenson, Sir William Cameron, Sir E. Higginson, Sir Reginald Gipps, Sir John Gordon, Sir R. Buller, and Sir R. Harrison; three Lieutenant-Generals: Lord Grenfell, Sir T. Kelly-Kenny, and Sir R. French; and three Major-Generals: Sir Henry Trotter, Sir Alfred Turner, and Major-General W. Leigh-Pemberton.

The five miles of route from the pomp of the Abbey to the comparative quiet and seclusion of Kensal Green were lined by an immense crowd, although it was not a public holiday, and the day's task had to be done as usual.

The long procession passed in silence, for there was no martial music. But the silence stood for more, much more, than the last good-bye to the still figure in the flag-draped coffin. It stood for the passing of a century, the end of a decade.

“The only old one . . .” was dead. The curtain was falling for the last time on “The Epic of Victoria,” and what a glorious curtain it was.

Yet for those who cared to look, there were shafts of happiness piercing the sadness. H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, was once more amidst the military panoply he had loved so well. . . . He was joining the two great women around whom his life had revolved—Victoria Regina, cousin and more than cousin, with whom he had marched in step for eighty years of life, and Louisa, wife and counsellor, without whom the years seemed void. . . . He was to be beside her once again.

## CHAPTER XXIII

" OF ALL SAD WORDS OF TONGUE OR PEN  
THE SADDEST ARE THESE . . .!"

**T**HERE can be little doubt that the cousins Victoria and George were originally destined for each other.

How different the reign of Queen Victoria might have been—how altered the course of English History.

When the little Princess Victoria was but nine years of age it was generally agreed that she must marry either the son of the Duke of Cumberland, or Prince George of Cambridge.

The Duke of Cumberland's son (later George of Hanover) was almost a complete invalid and could not have been seriously considered.

That Prince George was brought up in a manner which would have fitted him for the position of Consort is shown by the following extract from *Lives of the Hanoverian Queens of England* by Alice Drayton Greenwood. Writing of Queen Adelaide and her love of children . . . " her husband's nephew was entrusted to her charge. The Duke of Cambridge, being Viceroy of Hanover, sent his son to England for his education and the lad and his tutor usually lived at Windsor, where the Queen watched over him. The enthusiastic Landgravine Elizabeth, writing to tell a friend that the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge have now another baby (Mary, afterwards Duchess of Teck), ' which is of all the pretty children you

ever saw the prettiest,' adds that Prince George 'is so well off under our most perfect Queen's protection and care that he is a most fortunate boy.'"

At what age the idea was suggested to Victoria history does not relate, but it seems clear that she looked upon him as something more than merely a possible husband for some considerable time before her succession.

*She regarded him as her property, to be collected when she was ready to take him!*

In those early years after her accession to the Throne, Victoria was not anxious to marry, but she knew it would have to be done, and was ready to take the necessary step when seriously called upon to do so.

There would never have been any opposition to the union with cousin George so far as Victoria was concerned —one feels that both her head and her heart inclined her to look with favour upon such a marriage.

The trouble lay with the Prince. He was broader-minded than his cousin, and he was also infinitely more idealistic and romantic.

Again in his case there is no evidence to show just when the idea that he should marry his cousin and become King-Consort of England was first mooted to him —except that it seems quite clear that it was some time before that first momentous *tête-à-tête* meeting (save for the presence of the ubiquitous Lehzen) shortly after the death of King William.

But there is no doubt that he did not take so easily to the idea as did Victoria, and it was his conduct then, and his departure abroad almost immediately afterwards, that killed the project for ever.

But once the bogey of marriage was cleared from their horizon, self-consciousness and embarrassment disappeared as a barrier between them, and there commenced

a friendship which was something even more than a friendship, and which successfully withstood the tests of time, sorrow, and even the inexcusable petty jealousy exhibited by the Queen in regard to her cousin's marriage.

Had George been of a more resentful nature, or perhaps it would be nearer the truth to say had he had less real affection for his cousin and Queen, her attitude on that occasion, which must have caused him so much pain, embarrassment and inconvenience, might well have caused a permanent break between them. But it was not so.

The Duke never allowed man or woman to speak slightingly of his wife in his presence without a reprisal—sometimes of a violent nature, as when he flung the German princeling out of his front door into the street—save only Victoria! She was different, and a much-privileged person in his eyes.

And in the end it would seem that from three events—the young Prince's avoidance of marriage with her; her sorrow at the loss of Prince Albert; and her unreasonable attitude over her cousin's morganatic marriage (plus her eventual change of front in regard to Louisa Fairbrother), there sprang a link between Victoria and George which nothing, save death, ever could or ever did break.

For this very beautiful friendship perhaps George was mainly responsible. Always he served her loyally, faithfully and devotedly—at first, maybe because he felt that by refusing to share her throne he had created an obligation to at any rate share her work and cares, and more latterly because of the various links that bound them together, more and more closely with the increasing toll of the years.

In the beginning she was pleased to have him serve her and to reward him for his services. Later, after the death of the Prince Consort, she leaned on him more and more,



THE AUTHOR'S SOUVENIR OF THE WEDDING AT THE CHAPEL ROYAL OF  
MISS IRIS FITZGEORGE, GRANDDAUGHTER OF THE DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE



and there was less of rewards. They were no longer a Prince who served and a Queen who was served, but two very old and devoted friends, who took friendship and service as a matter of course.

George of Cambridge should have been the Queen's Consort. All the nation agreed to that—and deplored the fact that eventually she had to turn to a foreign Prince, however good and fine he might be (and undoubtedly was).

Even Parliament displayed its feelings in regard to the matter. In the marriage arrangements they refused Prince Albert an allowance of £50,000 and granted him one of £30,000 only. If the Consort had been Prince George of Cambridge, would the Duke of Wellington, or any statesman for that matter, have dared, or desired, to query the amount?

Yet the Duke of Cambridge was destined to be Victoria's "deputy" for twice as long as Albert was by her side—although he never held the quarter of Albert's political power. Then he had no Stockmar to goad him on.

The tale is a long one—George and Victoria children together, both almost of an age; both very near to the Throne. At fourteen George gives Victoria, on her birthday, "a brooch shaped like a lily of the valley." A little later, Victoria presents George with a dressing-case for his birthday (for those days a rather *intimate* present for a girl to give to a young man). Rumours everywhere that there will be a Royal marriage between them. George as her soldier—made Colonel in her Army, and later Commander-in-Chief. George serving her with tireless loyalty and devotion. George comforting her in her sorrow—helping her in a thousand ways after she became the "Widow of Windsor." George taking more and more

from her shoulders as the years passed, and told upon her. Victoria depending more and more upon him, as time went on. . . .

In 1889 Victoria linked them together by her pathetic message : “ *Now we are the only old ones left . . . !* ”

These eight words conjure up a pleasing little phantasy which might well, in effect, have actually taken place more than once. . . .

A small, secluded room in the Palace, more comfortable and “ homely,” in the true Victorian style, than the other rooms of state and ceremony. The firelight is flickering on the walls, for it is dusk, but the lamps have not yet been lighted.

And the firelight that flickers on the walls also shows two grey heads ; two faces full of character, with a certain likeness between them. . . .

Victoria, in her sober widow’s black and white, sits in an arm-chair on one side of the fire-place ; George stands at the other, leaning his elbow on the mantelpiece. . . .

Faintly across the years come the phantom whispers of conversation. . . .

“ Have you had a hard day, George ? ”

“ Why, no, Cousin—I would not say hard. There was much to do, but that I can still do it without tiring overmuch gives me great satisfaction. . . . ”

A faint sigh :

“ Yes, we are both getting old, George.”

“ I suppose we are, Cousin. But it is a natural fate.”

“ It has been a long time, has it not ? ”

“ A very long time . . . ! ”

She glances up at him and from long association she can almost read his thoughts. She knows he is thinking of his greatest loss, and she, who has also had her loss, can understand so well.

Their eyes meet across the flickering beams of firelight, and a voice whispers above them :

" To be lonely, and to find a Friend—to be wearied, and to find Peace—to be tired, and to have Rest awaiting you. These things are good . . . ! "

Then of a sudden George removes his gaze and straightens his figure.

Victoria, sensing the change, does likewise, and sits very erect in her chair.

Suddenly they cease to be George and Victoria, two old, old friends gazing gently and placidly back into the long past. They become H.M. the Queen of England, and H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge.

He coughs, a little dryly, and bends to look at his watch in the firelight.

" I fear I must be going, Marm. I have a dinner for Christ's Hospital to preside over this evening, and some matters that need attention before that."

She is still looking into the fire as she answers :

" Very well, Cousin, you may go. I hope you will have a pleasant evening ! "

" I thank you, Marm. . . . "

She extends her hand, and he bends over it. The salute he impresses on it is, maybe, just a trifle warmer and more definite than the mere brushing with the lips which etiquette demands.

He takes two steps backwards, turns, and, very stiff, erect and military, strides to the door, which closes softly behind him.

Her Majesty Queen Victoria remains in her chair. Her hands are folded in her lap, her eyes look still into the fire. Her thoughts are a long, long way away. . . .

## CHAPTER XXIV

### MEMORIES

**M**Y connection with the family of the Duke of Cambridge comes from the marriage of my cousin, Sofia Holden, to the Duke's second son.

Rear-Admiral Sir Adolphus FitzGeorge was stationed with the Fleet at Malta when he first met Sofia, there on a visit with her mother and two sisters.

In those days it was fashionable to go to Malta. Some years later I went myself, and it seemed as if I was sailing to the edge of creation. The journey was rather an ordeal, but the reward worth all the tossing in the Bay. Picnics, blue skies, warm seas, ships anchored in the harbour, all the might of England's power, and girls in demand—it was all most enjoyable. Except the smell.

Dolly (the name by which Sir Adolphus FitzGeorge was known) and Sofia fell in love and were married by my father, the Rev. A. W. Bailey, at Hessle Church in Yorkshire, on September 21st, 1875.

One of my first memories of the FitzGeorges was when Dolly and Sofia came to stay with us at the Vicarage at East Stoke, our Nottinghamshire home. I was five years old at the time and the FitzGeorges brought their daughter, who was the same age as myself, with them. Dolly was to take part in theatricals in Newark.

The blood of the mother was in the son, and the Stage called to Dolly just as a generation before it had called

to Louisa Fairbrother and caused her to defy her father's will.

When I was seven Olga FitzGeorge and I were bridesmaids together at the wedding of Lady FitzGeorge's sister, Hélène Holden, to Mr. Louis Mitchell.

I have good reason to remember that wedding for Winstead Hall, Sofia's home, was crowded with guests and I was given, for lack of other accommodation, a small room overlooking the stable-yard. I hardly slept a wink, for all night long wheels rumbled, grooms muttered and lanterns flickered, while the last preparations for the great wedding were rushed through in the courtyard below.

I also remember, almost as in a dream, the ball that took place after the wedding with the small bridesmaids, Olga, granddaughter of Louisa Fairbrother, and myself, claiming so large a share of the limelight because of our tender years.

It was when I left school that I really came to know the family of His Royal Highness. Then I went to London for the thrilling and most important procedure of "coming out" and stayed with Dolly and Sofia at their house in Eaton Square.

The very blasé young woman of to-day thinks little of "coming out," but what a thrill it was to the girls of my generation! Even the preliminaries—the "putting-up" of one's hair, the lengthening of skirts, the buying of frocks—were full of excitement.

The girls of to-day take in their stride the things that thrilled us so much—treat them as a mere matter of course. Sometimes as "rather a bore." There is but a very thin line of demarcation now between the school and the ball-room. Whereas in the 'nineties one woke in the morning a school-girl, and went to bed at night a

grown-up young woman, "out in the world" at last. And there was a tremendous thrill in that!

The modern generation, too, know nothing of the stern discipline of nursery and schoolroom, living life to the theme song of "Little girls should be seen and not heard," and "Oh, Ethel, I am surprised at you." It was real paradise to find oneself suddenly treated as a real person, to find people looked at you as an equal instead of inspecting to see whether you had a dirty neck.

And knowing nothing of this they cannot realize the comparative freedom of being a young lady who has "come out" and must therefore be accepted as an adult, by other adults who have hitherto treated her as a child.

One of the greatest joys of my stay at Eaton Square was driving round London with Sofia. London in itself was full of a thousand new sights and experiences, but the thrill that was greater than them all was the fact that we drove in Royal carriages.

The FitzGeorges' carriages were identical with those used by other Royalty. The coachman and footman wore the same livery. The result was that our passing created considerable interest, and one could see people nudging one another, speculating as to who we were. Men raised their hats and policemen saluted, all of which naturally interested me immensely.

One of the practical advantages of driving in Royal carriages was that we passed through the traffic more quickly. We used the private gates in the Parks, for example, which often saved us waiting in traffic blocks.

On Sundays, together with Admiral Sir Adolphus and Lady FitzGeorge, I attended services at the Chapel Royal.

One Sunday, after a service at the Chapel Royal, Sofia and I drove round to call on the Duke of Cambridge at Gloucester House, Park Lane.

His Royal Highness happened to be away for the week-end, so Sofia and I wandered round the great house, examining its treasures and mementoes of an age that was passing.

I particularly remember this visit because of something I saw in the Duke's bedroom.

Here, on the washstand, Sofia showed me a stand for seven tooth-brushes. His Royal Highness always kept a different tooth-brush for each day of the week. On this occasion Saturday's, Sunday's and Monday's tooth-brushes were absent, His Royal Highness being away for a short week-end.

By this means one could judge the length of his visit.

My actual memories of His Royal Highness are, after all these years, a trifle vague and shadowy, but the general impression is very definite.

It is an impression of great moral strength.

This study of his life has given me a more complete picture. I see him as a kindly, generous, affable and amiable man, but with very strong opinions of his own which he did not like too definitely opposed. A trifle peppery and irritable when crossed, and very much a "die-hard." Rather a queer mixture of the democrat and the autocrat in his views, but withal conveying an atmosphere of great nobility in his sayings and doings.

I saw the Duke on a number of official and ceremonial occasions, and of these the one that left the greatest impression on me was when I saw him riding in an important funeral procession in 1898.

Sofia and myself occupied a window in a house overlooking the route, and had a magnificent view of the procession.

But my eyes saw only one figure, that of His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, formerly Commander-

in-Chief of the British Army, once so near to the throne of England, who, if he had wished, might easily have been her King.

Still as a rock he sat his charger. The uniform sparkled in the sunlight. Then the procession was past.

But the pregnant moment stayed a little longer, and the tenseness showed on the face of the woman who stood beside me, the woman who knew His Royal Highness as "father."

The thought must have flashed through the minds of many that day that before many years had passed they would be witnesses of other great funeral processions. For nine years before Victoria had said to Cousin George :

" Now we are the *only old ones left.*"

A century was ending, so was an era. While I stood at the threshold of a new life, cousins Victoria and George were staging a never-to-be-forgotten "finale."

Apart from personal reasons of my connection with the FitzGeorges, I always took the deepest interest in the Duke's family, because it all seemed such a wonderful romance to me.

The beautiful and charming Louisa FitzGeorge I never saw. But I saw her pictures, and heard so much about her that it has always seemed to me as though I had.

She bore the Duke three sons in all.

The eldest, George William Adolphus, was born in 1843. He entered the Army, holding a commission in the 20th Hussars, and saw active service in the Egyptian Campaign of 1882. He fought at the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, and eventually attained the rank of Colonel. He married, and had three children—Iris, Daphne, and George.

Unfortunately, Colonel George FitzGeorge was forced to

retire from the Army at a comparatively early age, owing to a stroke of paralysis, which left him a chronic invalid.

The second son, Adolphus Augustus Frederick, was born three years later than his elder brother. He entered the Navy in 1859, and retired in 1893, afterwards acting as Equerry to his father, the Duke. Of his marriage to my cousin I have already written.

The third son was Augustus Charles Frederick. Born in 1847, he also selected the Army for his profession, and also joined the Hussars—in his case the 11th. Later he transferred to the Rifle Brigade, and like his brother became a Colonel. He served in Canada. He was A.D.C. to Lord Napier of Magdala in India, and was a member of the Staff of the Prince of Wales during the Royal visit to India in 1876. He retired from the Army in 1901, and acted as his father's private secretary during the last years of the Duke's life.

It is rather curious to note that, on the day after the Duke's funeral, King Edward VII conferred the K.C.V.O. on his two younger sons.

## CHAPTER XXV

"SO DIED A PRINCE . . .!"

**S**O there died at the ripe age of 84 a great Prince and a very gallant gentleman. There are some of the younger generation who may need convincing of that greatness. "What did he ever *do*? In these days one hardly hears of him . . .!"

Perhaps not, but the answer is that the fact that his life was not, in the general sense of the term, spectacular, proves his greatness. For it is not difficult to be spectacular when opportunity arises—but to live for eighty-four years, almost at the head of a nation, and throughout all those years to do one's duty, meticulously, conscientiously, and sincerely, without lapse and without neglect, is a far truer test of greatness than any sensational and spectacular act of courage, or self-sacrifice.

In his obituary notice, on March 21st, 1904, the *World* spoke of the Duke's ". . . untiring devotion to duty; his unfeigned kindness; his soldierly simplicity. . . ."

Of his kindness there are a thousand instances in history and anecdote. Here is just one of them, selected because it demonstrates at once his kindness even to the most humble of his people; his innate sense of justice, and his essential tactfulness on occasion:

A sergeant in the Royal Field Artillery came to the end of his period of service. Owing to the fact that he had once been reduced to the ranks, he needed to serve one more month after the date of expiration of his service in order to qualify for another penny a day on his pension.

He applied to his Colonel, who ruled that as the need for the extra month was due to his own fault, his service could not be extended, and he must forfeit his extra penny a day.

Somebody said to him : “ You go and see the Commander-in-Chief, Sergeant. He’ll see justice done to you.”

The sergeant took this advice and went to the Horse Guards, determined to see the Duke.

While he was trying to obtain admission, the Duke himself happened to come out of his office and asked what the sergeant wanted. The sergeant, shivering in his ammunition-boots, explained his case, and the Duke listened with attention :

“ You were reduced to the ranks ? ”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ But, in spite of that, you regained your stripes ? ”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ Then you are entitled to your extra service and your extra penny, and you shall have them. Leave that to me, Sergeant. But you had better not go back to your Battery—take a month’s furlough instead. That will make it all right.”

And so it was.

The Duke had a very keen sense of justice, poetic as well as legal. On one occasion he sentenced a young officer, as a punishment, to wear his uniform on all occasions, both military and social. The officer protested against this, as being humiliating.

“ Humiliating ? ” thundered the Commander-in-Chief. “ What the devil do you mean, sir ? I am ordering you to do as a punishment only what every private soldier has to do as a matter of course, and they are not humiliated ! There can be no humiliation in wearing Her Majesty’s uniform. Get out, sir, before I increase your punishment ! ”

The *World*, in its obituary notice, also said :

" . . . The Duke of Cambridge knew his place in the world and he filled it conscientiously. He had his family's sense of duty . . . a thoroughly efficient administrator of the Army as he took it over in 1856, and as he wished it to remain in 1895. If that system could have been retained, no more efficient person than the Duke could have conducted it . . . Against the Army administration not a suspicion of corruption was ever breathed. . . . "

The *Daily Telegraph* of March 18th, 1894, mentioned that among those who stood around his deathbed were Mr. Hall, his steward for forty-five years, and Mr. Dealtry, who had been his valet for thirty-five years.

The Duke's hatred of Prussia and the Hohenzollerns dated from 1866, when Prussia overthrew the Kingdom of Hanover. The Duke was at that time second in succession to the Hanoverian Throne.

He was the last survivor of the old Hanoverian and Guelphic Order, which fell into abeyance after the death of William IV.

Socially he was sorely missed—particularly did his more intimate friends regret the old-fashioned dinner-parties he gave every Sunday, usually followed by whist.

For many years he had been regarded as almost a part of Piccadilly, where he could be seen daily when in town, walking along arm-in-arm with one of his sons, or with his old crony, General Albert Williams. His phaeton, too, was a familiar feature of the Park.

The interest in the Turf which the Duke evinced from a very early age, lasted throughout his life, and at the time of his death he was one of the senior members of the Jockey Club. Although he never owned a race-horse himself, he attended race-meetings whenever possible.

The Duke died a wealthy man. Latterly he had, with

considerable foresight, purchased land and property in the Kingston and Coombe districts. It was cheap when he bought it, but on account of the development of these, at that time quite rural, districts, it increased very considerably in value before his death.

Actually his last illness was contracted through his meticulous attention to and care for the happiness and welfare of his tenantry.

During the Christmas of 1903 he insisted, despite failing health, on making his annual visit to his estates at Kingston Vale to distribute clothing and other comforts. The weather was bitterly cold, and the Duke contracted a severe chill from which he never really recovered.

It is strange how the shadow which his cousin, Queen Victoria, had cast upon his married life pursued him even to the grave !

A spectator of the Duke's funeral commented in regard to his two sons (Adolphus and Augustus) who were present in their respective Army and Navy uniforms :

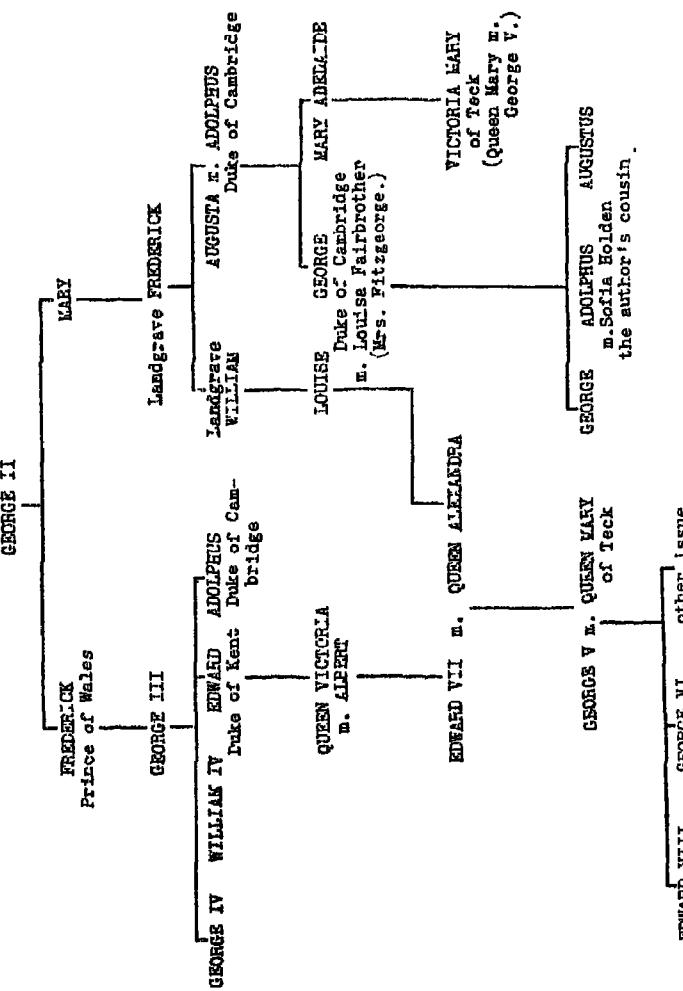
" . . . It seems strange that they had so distant a place in the procession in view of their acknowledged relationship. . . . "

They were, in fact, behind all the Royal Family, official mourners, foreign diplomats, etc., in the *ninth* carriage. The eldest son, Colonel George FitzGeorge, being unfortunately paralysed, could not attend the funeral proper, but was present at the preliminary services.

It is also notable that, when laid in his last resting-place, the Duke did not lie surrounded by other Princes and Kings, or Royalty of any description. The mausoleum of red granite in Kensal Green cemetery, when he was laid there, contained only the coffins of his wife, Louisa FitzGeorge and of her brother, Colonel Farebrother.

It was His Royal Highness's last gesture.

## CHIEF AND DESCENDANTS OF GREGORY II



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DAVID DUFF

*Author of "Princess Louise—Duchess of Argyll", etc.*

EDWARD AUGUSTUS, Duke of Kent, fourth son of George III, was born at Buckingham House, at noon on November 2nd, 1767.

The Duke is best remembered as the father of the greatest queen England ever had, Victoria. But for his premature death he might have had a bigger place in British history—as king of England. For if the Duke of Kent had outlived his brother, William IV (Duke of Clarence), he would have come to the throne, taking precedence over his daughter.

Very little has been written of the first fifty years of the Duke's life, though they were crammed with interest, strange happenings and adventure. Historians have been content with concentrating on the last three years of his life (1817-20), during which time the Duke, under most extraordinary circumstances, arranged and carried out his marriage with the Princess of Saxe-Coburg and the little Princess Victoria was born.

In his private life the Duke met many squalls. He was unpopular with his father, George III; he quarrelled with all his brothers, in particular the Regent, an amazing scene taking place between them at the christening of Queen Victoria; he fell hopelessly into debt, some remaining unpaid until Queen Victoria ascended the throne and cleared her father's memory.

The Duke's later years were influenced by the forecast of a gypsy woman who prophesied that he would be father of a great queen. History proved this prophecy to be correct, although the Duke reaped no benefit. He died almost in penury at Sidmouth in 1820, the Duchess, his wife, having no money to return to London with the infant Victoria.

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was being ill-treated by her royal husband and, in a fit of rage, Prince Ahmad went to a fashionable club in Cairo and, before an audience of distinguished politicians and diplomats, drew a revolver and fired, wounding Prince Fuad in the neck. Criminal proceedings followed and Prince Ahmad was charged with attempted murder, was fined £1,800 and sentenced to seven years' penal servitude. He began his sentence as an ordinary prisoner but was later announced insane. He was transferred to a private English mental home, and for more than 25 years relatives and friends intrigued to secure his release. Then one day in the summer of 1925, the Prince disappeared. A hue and cry broke out, and it was discovered that the Prince had crossed to the Continent.

Prince Ahmad, while in England, was estimated to have an income of £200,000 a year. But his estates, said to be worth £4,000,000, were sequestrated. He attempted, in vain, to sue the British Government for this amount. In 1933 Prince Ahmad married a Turkish girl and settled in Istanbul.

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